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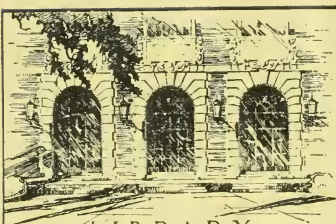
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BENEATH THE WHEELS.



VOL. III.

Thomas Entwistle

BENEATH THE WHEELS.

A Romance.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "OLIVE VARCOE," "PATIENCE
CAERHYDON," "SIMPLE AS A DOVE," ETC.

"The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
All that the proud can feel of pain."

BYRON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON :

TINSLEY BROTHERS,* 18, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.

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BENEATH THE WHEELS.

CHAPTER I.

 HE time at Crehylls was a time of sorrow and dismay; hence it was easy for Lydia, when the evening fell, to creep out unperceived. Very small restraint had hitherto been placed on her movements; she was not a child who had been cramped in a nursery, or confined in a school-room. Free to come and go as she would in the great castle, and living her daily life with her father and mother, not with nursemaids, she had acquired a calmness and self-possession, and curious, unchildish self-reliance, not often found among the children of the rich. The street Arab has it always, and the little ones of the poor, who go forth with tranquil courage to earn their bread at an age when the infant rich are helpless, have it likewise. Yet Lydia's self-reliance differed somewhat from theirs; they have the dignity and the pride of labour, she had the less worthy but more imposing dignity of race and position. She was Lydia Crehylls, of

Crehylls, and knowing this, she knew no fear. Like the young patricians of the Southern States, who walked with calm, fearless superiority among their slaves, their infant lips speaking with authority to bearded men, so did she go forth in unconscious pride and unconscious innocence, brave as a child-Una on her lion.

Do people think enough of the courage of children? Do they ever notice the little bird-watchers out in lonely fields bearing their solitude in utter fearlessness? Or do they ponder on the children down in dark mines, creeping from level to level, with danger and death lurking ever in the air they breathe? Or do we consider the courage, the fortitude of those little ones, who traverse slushy streets or dismal lanes in the deep darkness of winter mornings, and then suffer patiently to have their young lives bound to the dreary, grinding, crushing wheels of cotton mills? Who among us sufficiently considers the forlorn courage of the London child, who, in the dreary waste of streets, wanders friendless, meeting ever a ceaseless stream of human life, which passes on, leaving him uncared for, unclaimed, houseless, and alone? Such hopeless, pitiful, patient courage as theirs ought to rouse even hearts of stone, to help the little London wanderers.

Children have strange histories, but no hand has been yet found skilful enough to write them.

It was nine o'clock when Lydia reached the hollow tree, within which Alfred Singleton lay. It was a huge oak of enormous bulk, and now in its decay its great trunk had room and to spare, for the fugitives that sought its shelter. When the child crept first within the hollow, the semi-darkness at first blinded her ; then, as her eyes cleared, she saw Alfred sleeping, and for a moment she stood and looked on him, the deep, unconscious, motherly tenderness, which is the root of all woman's love, swelling in her little heart, and wetting her cheeks with tears. Then, kneeling down, she put her arm around his neck, and woke him.

"Are you very, very tired of waiting?" she said. "I was afraid to come till nearly dark, lest any one should watch me."

"And is Mr. Whalley gone?" asked Alfred.

"Oh yes—hours and hours ago," she replied ; "and, just as you guessed, papa said he might take you away ; so they searched all through the house and garden for you, and were obliged to come and tell him you were gone. Then he got very angry ; and papa sent for me, and questioned me ; but I would not say anything."

Alfred looked into her shining eyes with a piteous fear creeping into his own.

"They did not beat you, or shut you up, or do anything cruel to make you tell?" he cried, eagerly.

Poor boy! He was so used to cruelty and ill-usage, that he could not understand Lydia's free, happy life.

"Beat me!" she exclaimed, in wonder; but her mind would not hold the thought, and in a moment she had dismissed it. "Look here," she said, "I saved all my bread-and-butter for you when I had my tea, and here are a lot of biscuits too. I took as many as this little silk bag would hold, because I thought you would be hungry. I wish I could have brought you something better."

"This is very good," said Alfred.

Then, like a little mother, Lydia sat down, and saw him eat, with great contentment.

"Now here are some cherries to finish with, and two apples," she said; "but you must put them in your pocket against another time, and the rest of the biscuits too."

Alfred did as he was told, greatly admiring at the same time his little friend's foresight.

"How clever you are," he said, "to think of all this! I shan't be hungry now to-morrow as I walk on."

Lydia gazed at him very wistfully. It was so strange to her to have hunger, and thirst, and weariness, the world's hardness and cruel usage brought home to her like this. And these were here, before her eyes, speaking in Alfred's forlorn fears, his friendlessness, and in his pallid looks.

"But you can buy something to eat with money," she said; "I have thought of that, too, and I have unlocked my money-box. See, here are all these shillings! You wont want anything now as you go to Penkivel, and you wont sleep out-of-doors again beneath the trees?"

Her store of silver was about ten or twelve shillings—a sum which seemed immense to Alfred.

"I can't take all that money," he said. "I—I don't think I should ever be able to pay it back."

"You must have it," returned Lydia, pressing it on him eagerly. "I don't want it back."

There was a little dispute between them before he took it, but she gained her point. Then he gave her a small gold pencil-case, and told her to keep it for his sake till he came to Crehylls again.

"I have had this a long, long while," he said, "so I would not give it to any one in all the world but you, Lydia."

"I will never part with it," she answered. Then from beneath her cloak she took a little bundle, with a smile of immense triumph. "This is yours," she said; "I knew you would want it, so I hid it away directly I got in; and I am so glad I did, because that wicked man wanted it. He said——"

But here the child stopped; she did not like

to let Alfred know Mr. Whalley had called him a thief.

"Tell me what he said, Lydia," pleaded the boy; "tell me all the wicked lies he told to your papa."

She told it at last, trembling as she spoke, and clasping his hand in hers.

"The wickedest thing he said was that you had robbed him," said Lydia; "and that you had silver things and jewels in your bundle."

The poor boy, hearing this, felt his heart stand still, and seizing the little bundle, he began undoing the knots hurriedly.

"What are you doing?" cried Lydia, putting both her arms around him. "I wont look in the bundle; I wont see what is in it! If you think I believe Mr. Whalley, I'll never speak to you again. Here's your pencil-case. I can't take it, if you fancy I am such a mean, wicked, cruel girl, as to want you to prove to me that you are not a thief."

She pressed the pencil-case in his hand, and covered her face with her cloak, lest her eyes should fall on the obnoxious bundle. Her passion subdued Alfred, and he tied up the bundle again with a sigh.

"Well, I wont show you the things if you don't like, Lydia," said he. "I have only got some of my clothes here. Please take the pencil-case, Lydia, because I must say good-bye now.

See how dark it is getting!" he added, sorrowfully.

Then his arm stole about her neck, and, cheek pressing against cheek, the children sat in silence. It was so hard to part, so dreadful, so cruel, that not all their innocent hope and faith could for a time assuage the pang.

Thus they sat in the entrance of the hollow tree, with the grey light of the long June twilight falling on them sadly. All the tall shadows had crept away with the vanished sun, leaving in their stead a faint darkness, through which there glimmered a white mist rising beneath the sombre trees, like ghosts with wreathed and beckoning arms.

Lydia's cheeks were wet with tears, and she uttered not a word, when Alfred rose, unclasped her small hands from his neck, and slowly walked away. But when she saw him going, a cry sprang to her lips, and rushing forward she clung to him with sobs and tears.

"Do not cry, Lydia," said Alfred. "I will come again. I will, indeed, Lydia. The beautiful lady, who seemed so good, will bring me to Crehylls, if I ask her."

"Come back with me," cried Lydia, "and I'll beg papa not to give you to Mr. Whalley."

"Will he listen to you, Lydia?" asked Alfred, in that patient voice of his. "Can you promise he will listen?"

Lydia was silent, then Alfred kissed her and wiped her tears.

"You see, dear, I must go," he said. "If that bad man took me back to his cruel house, I should grow up wicked and untaught. I will not do that. I am right in running away. Do not be afraid, Lydia; God will take care of me."

"I will not cry any more," answered Lydia, still clinging to his hand; "I will go with you."

"No, that cannot be," he said. "If you say that, I'll stop here, and let Mr. Whalley kill me. You would be wicked to run away, but I am not."

Lydia thought over this question a moment, and seemed to see its justice, for her clasp upon his hand was slowly, slowly relinquished, and she stepped back a pace, leaving a little strip of turf between them, which was soon to grow into miles and miles of sea and land.

"You will come back?" she said, in a sobbing voice, with her hands stretched out towards him. "Alfred, you will come back? Mind, it was mamma—my mamma, who is in heaven—who said we were to be always friends."

"I'll come back," he answered. "I'll never forget her words. I have no one in the world to love but you, Lydia. I'll come back soon."

They kissed once more, then parted; and soon the little strip of turf grew to be a long vista in the park; then, as little Alfred looked back for

the last time, and waved his hand, the white mists covered him, and he was gone. He seemed to vanish into night and darkness, and Lydia, feeling suddenly alone, fell upon the grass and sobbed aloud. Now, for the first time, she began to be afraid, not for herself, but for that small, brave, forlorn figure, which had wandered away lonely into the outer world and darkness.

Lydia wept a long while—grief for her dead mother mingling strangely with her grief at this parting. One reflection alone had joy and triumph in it: they had foiled Mr. Whalley, and that cruel, wicked ogre was gone away baffled and raging. Another idea—the first which would have entered the saddened mind of experience—never came to these children at all. They never once questioned Lady Crehylls's sincerity—never wondered whether her proffer of friendship was but a vague, momentary, worthless impulse, or a true and thoughtful pledge. In perfect faith and trust they believed her, and took her literally at her word. And in this simple faith Alfred was gone forth, on his lonely journey, to walk to Penkivel. In the same childish spirit of belief, Lydia thought of his reception there, and began to feel comforted.

Creeping home at last between the trees, her little white figure startled the deer, and frightened many a hare and rabbit that ran across her

feet. She got to the library unquestioned, and put her tiny chill hand within her father's; then, leaning her face upon it, she cried herself asleep.

* * * * *

Afraid to follow the road, lest he should meet there the dreadful spectre of Mr. Whalley, Alfred chose a footpath which struck across some fields. The mists, which had rolled along beneath the great trees of the park, lay upon the meadows only like faint clouds, and overhead the moon and the summer stars shone clearly. The sky had no darkness in it, for the light of lingering day still streaked the west in fleecy bars, while stars and moon seemed to look down through a thin grey veil upon the dewy earth.

Flinging off the grief and sense of loneliness which clung cold about his childish heart, he resolutely set himself the task to walk as far that night, as his strength would let him. He knew that it would be wise to put as great a distance as possible between himself and Crehylls, for if Mr. Whalley looked for him, he would search round about the castle.

As he sat alone in his hiding place, the boy had thought out all his plans. He would walk a long, long way, then seek for shelter at some poor cottage, and lie upon some rug or settle, or any place where they would let him sleep. In

the morning he would rise up early, and, going only a little way, he would hide in the woods, as he had done on leaving the school, and sleep through the heat of the day, and walk again at evening, when few people were on the road to see him; and wherever there was a footpath, he would choose that rather than the highway. Bread and milk he could get at the cottages, and water from the brooks; and perhaps, when he had gone a day's journey or so, it would be safe to ask some kindly farmer to give him a lift in cart or wain. Thus he thought to reach Penkivel in three or four days, at most; and that he should find there a sure haven he never doubted.

But the poor boy had not taken into his reckoning his own great weariness and weakness. The ease, and luxury, and peace at Crehylls had lulled his mind; but the rest had not been long enough to recruit his body; so, as he went patiently on through the hours of the night, each weary mile seemed longer, and at length his languid limbs would obey his will no longer. Then he thought he would rest at the first cottage, and seek a sleeping-place in some shed or barn; but, looking all around him, through the clear night, he perceived nowhere a friendly roof. The footpath had now brought him to a wood, whose leafy slopes ran down to the edge of a small rapid river, dashing by with a pleasant

murmur, which the still night brought distinctly to his ear. It was evident, that until he had crossed this wood, he could not hope to find either farm or cottage. The path ran on beneath the trees, with here and there a break in the thick foliage, through which glistened the shining river in its noisy course.

The child could scarcely trail his weary limbs when he crossed the stile, and entered the narrow footway, winding along beneath the thick green foliage. Here the light scarcely penetrated, and the horrors of darkness came upon him, adding anxiety and terror to his fatigue. If he should fall into some lurking pit or shaft, who would rescue him? He would lie there within that darkness, and die lingeringly, unsuccoured. Or if he stepped on a sleeping adder, who would save him? If he shrieked his very soul away, the poison working in his veins the while, no creature would come to him here in this lonely spot, except, perhaps, the dreadful Whalley, who might be hunting for him even now. Thus his over-wrought imagination conjured up scenes of terror to torment him, and above all, the idea of being pursued, laid hold of his fevered mind, with agonising strength. The cruel Whalley lurked now in every bush, or stood behind each towering tree, or crouched in the weird shadows that sprang upon him at every turn. Then there began to rise in his

teeming brain a thousand memories of old stories, which he had heard or read, of outlaws hunted by bloodhounds, or of captive kings and princes escaping from their foes ; and these surely had saved themselves by water. They had forded streams, or wading, followed the course of rivers, till their baffled pursuers had renounced the chase.

Down among the trees the white river glistened and beckoned, calling to him with a rush and roar of waters to come hither and find safety ; and as he stood irresolute, there sounded suddenly through the air the sharp angry cry of a solitary hound. This decided him. It was not imagination now, it was a real pursuit from which he was escaping, and his phantom fears fled at the thought, bringing a feverish energy in their stead. In this fear, for a time, his weakness vanished, and turning from the path, he ran with a frantic strength, through the thick bracken, through the prickly furze and the interlaced undergrowth of the deep wood, till on the brink of the river he paused exhausted. Again, there rose up into the night that solitary cry of the angry hound, and in the agony of feeling himself pursued, he plunged into the stream. Then it caught him in its strong current and whirled him onwards.

In his weakness the little fragile body was like a leaf upon the waters ; still, the river was not

deep, and in a moment he caught at a rock dividing the stream, and stood there safe, but breathless. The bundle tied upon his arm was secure still, and it had saved him from a heavy bruise, as the eddy flung him against the rock. Yet he was terribly exhausted, and with fainting eyes he looked round for succour. Then upon the green river bank, with the moon shining down upon it, he saw a white cross, glistening like silver. At first he fancied it was a vision sent from heaven, and he believed that he was dying; but as his heart beat high, and his gaze became intently fixed upon it, he saw the cross was cut deeply in the turf, and its shining whiteness was due to the gravel or rock beneath the soil, on which the moonlight fell with a silvery, trembling glitter. Still, it seemed a miracle, and he was surely going to die. What could this exhaustion, this faintness, be but death? Well, if he could only reach the cross and die there, he would be happy.

Every instant his feeble hold upon the rock grew weaker, and soon his trembling fingers must relax their grasp, and he would be thrown back into the waters, and carried down into their depths. Better strive to reach the shore, while there was still some measure of strength left in him, than die here drowned. Exerting all his strength and courage, he climbed to the top of the rock, and found the water shallower on the

other side ; so, wading as he went, and resting here and there upon the great brown stones, round which the eddies ran, he reached the shore, and fell upon the turf. The effort was over, but, in the faintness of his exhaustion, the thought that he was dying grew stronger upon his brain. And rising again to his knees, he crept towards the cross, laid his hand upon it, and fell forward with closed eyes, and senses shut up in darkness.

CHAPTER II.

ORNING was breaking dimly, when a shower of pebbles at her window, roused Grace Chagwynne from her slumbers.

“What’s to do now, I wonder?” she said to herself, as rising, she hurriedly threw on her gown, and went to the latticed casement.

Two men stood below, with the grey light falling coldly on their upturned faces. At the sight of them she grew pale, and waving her hand, as though to bid them be silent, she went back softly, and looked upon her sleeping husband.

“Let him sleep on,” she said to herself; “he’ll know the grief soon enough.” Then she stole downstairs, and opened the door with a shaking hand.

“Mother,” said the foremost of the two men, “here I be again! Where’s your welcome?”

“Many’s the time you’ve worn out your welcome, Martin,” returned Grace Chagwynne. a 8
“But come in both of ’ee, ef so be you haven’t

nauthin' with 'ee that would ruin the house that gives 'ee shelter."

"Never fear, mother," returned Martin; "there isn't an anker ashore, and wont be while the nights are like this."

The young man moved aside as he spoke, and Mrs. Chagwynne, for the first time, perceived his companion plainly.

"What have 'ee got en your arms, Michael Polgrain," she cried, sharply. "Thee hasn't drowned a child, surely?"

"Hould thee tongue, mother," returned Martin. "The child es aunly in a deadness."

"I tell 'ee he's wet as a shag! He's been drawed out of wartur!" cried Grace.

"But it was no human hand that put him in," said Michael Polgrain. "The boy have been en Dodman's Hole, and, as I am a living sinner, we found 'un stretched upon the cross, where Mathew Carbis's body was found washed ashore."

Grace drew back with a low cry, but her son pulled her forward again.

"Take the cheeld from 'un, mother," he said, "and get his wet things off, else he'll die sure enough, and then may be we shall get into trouble about 'un."

Thus adjured, Mrs. Chagwynne beckoned to Michael to enter, and he then removed his coat, which he had wrapped around the

boy, and laid him down on the settle by the hearth.

“As sure as I’m alive,” said Grace, leaning over him, “thic’s the cheeld, as axed me tha way to Crehylls last market day was a week.”

“Crehylls !” cried Michael Polgrain. “Yes, and he’ve got the Crehylls mark upon his face. I’m a doomed man from this day.”

“Thee’st been doomed a long while, Michael,” said Grace, drily, glancing at his ashen cheeks a moment, as she continued to divest the child of his wet garments. Martin, this while, had fetched turf and furze, and a great bright fire soon blazed upon the hearth.

Hearing all they said, as if in a dream, and yet too exhausted to move or speak, little Alfred Singleton lay with closed eyes, so white and quiet, that it was no wonder the men still thought him in a faint, or deadness, as they called it; and truly he could not tell himself when he at last heard their voices no more, as he dropped off gradually into a deep sleep. When he awoke, he found himself wrapped in blankets, lying on pillows by the fire. All was perfectly still. The little casement was wide open, and without the birds sang, and the sun shone brightly, the leaves waved to and fro, the shadows danced; and on the long sunbeams, which came glistening even to the very hearth, there wheeled and whirled a crowd of shining

gnats, which seemed to bring upon their wings the fragrance of June roses. On the hearth the kettle sang, the furze crackled, the burning turf glowed like clearest amber ; and all these sights and sounds brought with them a sense of rest and comfort, which wrapped the child within an atmosphere of peace. Suddenly Grace came bustling to his side.

“ Drink this, cheeld-vean,” she said. “ ’Tis harb tea. It have done thee a world of good already.”

Alfred drank it, and fell asleep again.

* * * * *

“ Carbis, I tell ’ee—Mathew Carbis—him that was murdered !”

These were the words that woke little Alfred, and starting up, he saw it was night again, and four people sat round the fire. These were Grace, the old farmer, her husband ; Martin, her son ; and the man they called Michael Polgrain. It was upon this man that Alfred fixed his eyes, half in wonder, half in fear. His face was a ghastly white ; the colour of a dead man’s ; his hands had the same unearthly hue, his eyes were haggard, and of so pale a grey, that the colour and life seemed to have faded out of them, leaving them dead, yet not blind ; and over all his aspect there was the same indescribable want of light and life, giving to his

face and figure a blighted, deathly look, past words to tell. It was he who was the speaker.

"Mathew Carbis, I say," he repeated; and his shaking hand put his untasted glass upon the table, while his hollow eyes passed steadily from one face to the other of his hearers.

"Well," returned Farmer Chagwynne, "I don't say that sich things can't be."

"Cheer up, man!" cried young Martin, slapping Polgrain on the shoulder. "The sun was in thee eyes, when thee must need'st take a bush for a bucha (ghost)."

"The sun in my eyes!" returned Michael. "I tell 'ee, I haven't seen the blessed sun these twenty years. No sunlight will ever daze my eyes again while I do live."

Slowly he bent his head forward, till his dead-white face fell upon his hands, and as he rested thus, there was deep silence in the room for the space of a full minute. During this while Alfred saw that Grace exchanged glances with her husband and her son, and a strange expression crossed the face of each.

"Drink thee toddy, Michael," said the farmer, in a pitying voice. "Thee'll feel better arter that."

"There's no drink brewed that will better me, farmer," replied the miserable man. "I'm fit fur my desp'rate trade now, and nothing else."

"And a bad trade it is since the war is over,"

said old Chagwynne. "Martin, sonny, get thee out of it as quick as thee can, afore thee'st ruined body an' soul."

The farmer here lifted his glass to his lips, and tasted complacently the genuine Hollands it contained.

"I wonder you arn't ashamed of yourself," remarked Grace, watching him. "I wouldn't titch sich liquor. 'Tis your son's life you are drinking."

"Get out of it, faather!" returned Martin. "That's mighty easy to say, but it isn't so easy to do. When a man is once in a traade like this, he caen't lev it all to waunce."

"But since it don't pay now, sonny," observed the shrewd old farmer, "simmin to me the traade will lev' thee waun day."

"Then we'll stay till it do," said Michael Polgrain, with fierce energy. "'Tis the aunly life fur me. Upon the land, I should ha' died long ago. I don't miss the sun so much upon the sea. I take the night-watch most always, and I'd bring the craft safe through shoals and breakers, or any other danger that lies beneath the deep. Upon the land I'm a poor creening (complaining) body, groping through the grey light, like a dead man coming home to the churchyard, who has lost his grave."

"Because thee art a whisht man theeself, Michael," observed Grace Chagwynne, sternly,

"dost think thee hast a right to lead away an aunly son into perdition?"

"Nonsense, mother," said Martin, "there's no sin in smuggling. What's the harm in rolling a few kegs ashore now and then?"

At this moment Grace's glance fell upon the sick boy, and she saw his eyes wide open, gazing eagerly into the pallid face of Michael Polgrain.

"Hush!" she said; "here's the cheeld awake and sensible. Art hungry, my sonny boy?"

She gave him a basin of Cornish broth, and while he ate it, the men questioned him, and heard all the tale he had to tell.

"So you are the lad thic oogly fellor in a yaller gig was prating about up at haafeway house?" said Martin.

"Yes, but you wont give me up to him?" pleaded Alfred, in terror.

"Never fear," said Grace; "we wont do that, my son."

"But ef thee starts to walk to Penkivel," said Michael, "schoolmaster will have thee, lad, sure as a gun."

"No, he shan't," replied the farmer. "I'll drive 'un down to Penkivel my aun self in the caart."

"Farmer, the boy waient be able to stan' fur a week and more, I tell 'ee," returned Polgrain; "and in that time, schoolmaster will have 'un, and thee and thine will be ruined right out."

"What are 'ee telling of, Michael?" asked Martin.

"I mean," whispered the smuggler, "that the boy has heard all our talk, and the best thing we can do is to take 'un for a long cruise with us, till the noise about his running away is quiet like. He'll be saafe, and we'll be saafe too, then, and that's all about it."

Seeing them whisper together, and deeming himself the cause, Alfred asked quietly if he could go to bed.

"I can sleep anywhere," he said. "I wont trouble you much if I can help it."

Michael Polgrain had said truly that the boy could not stand, and they had to carry him to the small low-roofed chamber, where they laid him in a little bed; and still feeling as though the long night walk, the eddying river, the shining cross, the strange talk that he had heard, and that pale man with the death-white face, were all a dream from which he should awake when better, little Alfred slept again the deep sleep of painless exhaustion.

CHAPTER III.



THE respectability of Mr. Whalley's house, and of Mr. Whalley's school was a fact too patent to be treated with a doubt. It might be true that he was a little severe with his pupils, but then severity was the order of the day. The England of that period was not a country which by any means "spared the rod." It flogged sailors and soldiers to death, it thrashed parish apprentices to the bone, and it beat children with a merciless hand. The public schools were full of cruelty ; private establishments followed their example ; and in many homes the same senseless system was pursued, under the grim but conscientious idea, that without the rod, some poor, weak—perhaps dull—child would grow up into a grimy ruffian. With such notions rampant and triumphant in the land, it was not likely, that the pitiful voices of that small minority, which protested against Mr. Whalley, would weaken the strong citadel of respectability within which he was intrenched. Like a spider within his web, he sat in safety, while the little

trembling flies came fluttering back to his cruel den. The holidays had been over a week, and day by day the victims—each feeling like a culprit—came feebly, helplessly to his side, and while he laid his strong, crafty hand upon each trembling head, brain and heart quivered; and scarce a boy amongst them failed to play the hypocrite with all his might, propitiating the dragon of his dreams with a wan smile, or little ghostly laugh, ringing in very fact with the faintness of despair.

Mr. Whalley counted them all in grimly, checking off their names in that stony receptacle, his memory, and glaring at the new boys like a wolf, to whom child's flesh was dear. Boys always love a good man, and hate a bad one. Their judgment is unerring. Men and women may be deceived, but children never. All Mr. Whalley's pupils hated him; and yet what a world of love and reverence every boy's heart holds, and how willing he is to pour it out on his master if the man be worthy! But he cannot be cheated; no amount of hypocrisy will deceive him, no amount of mere learning will gain his respect. The child's eyes look further,—they see the soul; and if this be not the noble, gentle, loving soul of a good man, the boy's heart is not won.

Was this the reason that Mr. Whalley never tried to deceive his pupils? Did he know it was

useless, and feel that even the smallest boy amongst them read him aright, and knew him to be a scoundrel? However, to all the world besides, the man played his part with unflagging strength of purpose, and succeeded to a strange extent. Perhaps the secret cause of this was money. He never made a debt; scrupulously punctual in all his payments, scrupulously civil in his dealings with the outer world, ceremonious and unfailing in all the forms of religion, he gradually gained the good opinion of his neighbours, and with this for a shield, he found he could do much as he pleased in his own house.

No one fights ogres now-a-days. Within the grim castle, represented by a modern front door, women and children are still devoured, and no knight-errant goes to their rescue. The law seldom reaches these silent ogres of society; their victims are too helpless or too ignorant to appeal to it, and they themselves are too cunning ever to assail any but the weakest and most defenceless.

As the boys came back to Mr. Whalley's, each one glanced wonderingly round the ugly school-room, missing the little, forlorn pale figure, which for two years had greeted their return with a wistful smile. Then the first comers whispered to the later arrivals that Alfred Singleton had run away, and Mr. Whalley had searched for him through the holidays,—oh, everywhere,—and

things were to be stricter than ever this half. Iron bars were on the windows, and bedroom doors were to be locked at night. Every heart applauded Alfred's courage, and many a secret scheme of flight was propounded by sinking spirits, before the first dismal week of school was over.

It was at the end of this week that Mr. Rathline, with all his easy swagger, increased by the consciousness of money in his pocket, presented himself at Mr. Whalley's respectable gate, and clattered loudly at the bell.

"Come to see my boy," he said, with a familiar nod to Mr. Whalley, as he was ushered into that gentleman's comfortable parlour.

There was a nervous twitch on the school-master's lips, as the servant set a chair for his visitor, but he did not speak till the door was closed.

"Don't you know the child has run away?" he asked.

"I have heard it, but I don't believe it," answered Rathline.

"Who do you think would take the trouble to invent such a tale?" demanded Mr. Whalley.

"Anybody who could get something by it," replied Rathline. "I thought at first my fair daughter-in-law had invented the story; now I suppose it is yours only."

"It is the truth," said Whalley, with sup-

pressed rage. "It is a folly to accuse me of lying in a matter, where I could only lose by it."

"You can hardly expect me to believe you without proof," returned Mr. Rathline, looking him in the face. "If you have agreed with Mrs. Singleton to hide the boy from me, you had better give up that plot instantly. I strongly advise you not to offend Richard Rathline."

"There is no such plot in existence," replied Whalley, in a cringing tone. "I have helped you many a time, Richard. I don't see why you should think I would offend you now."

"Don't call me Richard," said Mr. Rathline, with a look of great disgust. "I can't stand it."

"As you please," resumed Whalley, with a slight shrug of the shoulders; "I only wish to assure you, that the boy has simply and truly run away."

His earnest tone appeared to shake Mr. Rathline's doubts, for after indulging himself in a few expletives, he asked what course had been taken to recover the boy.

"I went first to Mrs. Singleton's," said Whalley; "and she sent me down to Castle Crehylls."

"To Crehylls!" repeated Rathline, in amazement. "Has she told——"

But here he checked himself suddenly, and waited for Mr. Whalley to speak again.

"She only told me, and truly enough, that the boy was there," said Whalley. "But he had fled again when I got to the castle, and I—I did not much like remaining in that neighbourhood——"

"You thought a certain Nathaniel Strangways might be asked for?" interrupted Rathline, sneeringly.

Whalley's face grew to a livid paleness, and he glanced at the door in ghastly fear.

"Why do you mention that name?" he said, in a hideous whisper. "Do you want it to be heard?"

"It is nothing to me if it is," retorted Mr. Rathline, with great emphasis on the pronoun.

The easy swagger on Mr. Rathline asserted itself with double strength as he spoke, as though his conscience were a perfect stronghold of virtue in which he rejoiced calmly.

"I don't say it is anything to you," returned the schoolmaster, meekly, "but you might be silent for the sake of others. You have had plenty of money of me, Rich—Mr. Rathline."

With the old disgust marked strongly on his face, Mr. Rathline folded his arms and whistled slightly.

"And very disagreeable money it was," said he. "But I think it was worth your while to pay it; and it was not altogether for the sake of the money. I might have had more elsewhere."

I wonder now what Mr. Pellew would give me, or the widowed Lady Crehylls?"

"What have I done to offend you that you talk to me like this?" asked Whalley, in a ghastly voice. "I know it was not for the money. It was for old friendship."

"Be quiet, man!" interrupted Mr. Rathline, pushing his chair still further from his old friend. "Don't speak to me of old friendship; you make my teeth chatter. I can tell you in a very few words, why I talk to you like this. It is because I believe you have sold my boy to Lord Crehylls; and I intend, in return, to let him know, where to look for a certain hawker, who has been missed for a good while."

"You were always fond of a joke," said Whalley, covering the abject fear upon his face by a ghastly attempt at a smile. "But I know you would not really carry out your threat for the world; and upon my word, I don't know what you mean by 'selling the boy to Lord Crehylls.' Losing him is a good deal out of my pocket. Your daughter-in-law paid well."

"So he does not know the truth," said Rathline to himself. "I thought Madeline had betrayed it, and so permitted this villain to do a virtuous deed,—which I mean to do myself one day. Never mind what I meant," he said aloud.

"If it is not true, that is enough. I mean to find the boy, that is all. You can't expect a father to sit still under the loss of an only son,—and a boy worth so much money, too!"

"Has he really a large fortune?" asked Whalley. "Mrs. Singleton would never confess it to me. Of course we must find the lad."

"But you wouldn't like to go into Cornwall again after him yourself?" observed Mr. Rathline. "Well, I can go. Having a clear conscience, I can go pleasantly. As for fortune, I look upon Alfred as worth to me a good many thousands."

Here Mr. Rathline whistled in a reflective manner, then, looking up, he said, suddenly, "Do you know who Mrs. Singleton is, Mr. Whalley?"

"I know she is the great singer, Madame Silvia," he answered.

"I ought to have asked if you knew who she was when she married Tom Singleton?" responded Mr. Rathline, with a curious smile twitching his lips.

"Some actress he picked up abroad, I suppose," said Mr. Whalley.

"No. She was Miss Sherborne,—Walter Sherborne's daughter," replied the easy Mr. Rathline, bringing his legs carelessly to the ground, from the chair on which they had been

swinging, and peering curiously into the face of his companion.

Had an earthquake rent the solid ground at his feet, Mr. Whalley could not have looked more ghastly. Not all the firmness of his iron will could keep the glare of fear, and horror from his light grey eyes, or steady the quivering of his livid lips. He had started from his chair at the first utterance of the word Sherborne, and crouching forward, he stood now, with both hands grasping the table, which lay between him and Mr. Rathline.

"Sherborne's daughter!" he gasped forth unwillingly. "And why, in the name of all the fiends, have you brought me in contact with her?"

Mr. Rathline was too triumphant to take offence at the tone of this question.

"I never did bring you in contact with her," he answered, coolly. "If you have spoken to her face to face, that was your own doing, not mine. When you lost the boy, you should have come to me; you would never have seen her then."

Mr. Whalley sat down again, with beads of sweat standing visibly on his brow.

"I wish I had never taken charge of the accursed imp," he said, gloomily.

Mr. Rathline fired at this, and he cried out, angrily, "A pretty charge! You have let a

boy run away who is worth thousands to me! And weren't you well paid to take care of him? I ask you that!" he exclaimed, as his swaggering fist came down upon the table with a sounding blow.

Mr. Whalley was cowed instantly; he began to shiver and tremble, calling out, in a whining voice, "Don't be violent, I entreat of you, Mr. Rathline; my house is so respectable," he added, apologetically, "that such a noise as that will astonish the servants."

"Your respectability!" sneered Mr. Rathline, with great disgust; "it's rotten to the core. I don't know, why I have saved you from being hanged these twenty years past. It is time the earth was rid of you."

"Hush! For mercy's sake don't speak so loud," whispered Mr. Whalley, in hideous terror. "What's the matter with you to-day, Rathline? Haven't I let you have money whenever you wanted it, ever since the day you got me in your power? Didn't I bail you out, when you were in prison, and pay the debt for you afterwards? And all the time I was struggling hard to live. A loose fish like you,—a fellow who never tries to be reputable,—hasn't an idea of the arduous toil, and patience it requires, to build up a position of respectability like mine."

"What's the good of it?" said Mr. Rathline,

with a sneer. "A touch of my finger would bring it down. I should be sorry to have such a shaky building round my ears. As to that old bailing business, which you remember so well, I wonder whether Mr. Pellew would not have done it gladly, and have paid me handsomely besides, if ——"

"Say what it is you want, Mr. Rathline," interrupted Whalley, with a piteous whine, "and I'll do it."

"I want you to remember that I have still got a certain knapsack in my possession, belonging to one Nathaniel Strangways, and I can produce it at any hour that it may be required," returned Mr. Rathline, telling the lie with a swaggering, careless air.

"Do you suppose I don't remember that?" asked the miserable schoolmaster. "What else is it you want? Speak out. Anything is better than bullying a man."

"Do you call yourself a man?" retorted Mr. Rathline. "You were never either a man or a boy; I believe you were always a devil from the beginning. I should never have been a bad fellow myself but for you."

"Is it worth while for us to keep up this kind of talk?" inquired Whalley, in an injured tone. "We have known each other too many years, surely, to quarrel over old times. As for the boy, I'm sorry he is lost, and I'll

do my utmost to recover him. I can't say more."

This assurance seemed to strike Mr. Rathline as true.

"No, it isn't worth while to talk like this," he said. "Only I require you to understand, that you owe your position and your respectability to me, because with a touch I can knock both down. So you are to play me no tricks."

"You know I dare not," returned Whalley.

"Very well," said Rathline. "Now, I'll tell you what I want you to do. When you find the boy—as you must—don't inform Madeline Singleton of the fact, but make it known only to me. And when she comes down here to search for him—as she will—you must baffle her."

"I can't see Sherborne's daughter again," replied Whalley, hurriedly; "that's impossible."

"But you must," continued Mr. Rathline. "I know her; she'll never give up her search for that boy, and in prosecuting that search, nothing can hinder her from coming to this house."

Mr. Whalley looked round the room with a nervous glance, and covered his mouth with his hand to hide his shaking lips.

"I wish the boy was dead," he hissed between his teeth. "Why does Sherborne's daughter take such an interest in him?—what is your son to her?"

"He is not my son," said Mr. Rathline, in the coolest manner. "I picked him up out of the sea. Ah! you may well look astonished. There, ring for whisky and hot water, and I'll tell you the story. My mouth is too dry to talk any more without wetting it."

* * * * *

Late that night, Mr. Rathline, much the worse for whisky,—literally much the worse, for when intoxicated the little good in him seemed drowned—reeled up stairs, assisted by his host.

"I'm sorry to bring you up so high," said Mr. Whalley, upon whom no amount of liquor took any effect; "but the boys and servants sleep in the lower stories."

"Ah," returned Mr. Rathline, with a deep-drawn, breath, "you are too cunning, not to have a reason, for taking yourself to the garrets like a rat. What is it?"

Here the pair reached a small landing, with a chamber-door to right and left, and opposite them another door, tall and narrow, evidently shutting in a still steeper flight of stairs than the one just passed. Mr. Rathline laid his hand on this door and tried it.

"Locked?" he said.

"Locked," replied the other. "I keep lumber up there, and things of that kind."

"I shouldn't wonder if you had a coining

shop, or some other dreadful wickedness behind that door," returned Mr. Rathline.

And so he swaggered to his room, showing to his host as he went, that he had loaded pistols with him; "for fear of burglars," he said, laughing, as he closed his door and locked it.

CHAPTER IV.

HAT strange man, Michael Polgrain, who seemed a dead man living again a cold grey life, flitted ghost-like through Alfred Singleton's dreams, as he lay, weak and fevered, in his bed. It was many days before the boy stood up again, and well nigh a fortnight ere, like a wan shadow, he crept downstairs. The day was wet and stormy, so he sat patiently by the turf fire, listening to the tick-tick of the tall clock, which joined its monotonous music to the patter of the rain on the casement. Here Grace Chagwynne found him as she came bustling in with an apron-full of furze and turf.

"Have 'ee dressed yourself, my son?" she said, surprised. "But you are fine and weak, sure?"

"Oh no, I am much better. I think I shall be able to go to Penkivel soon," he answered, hopefully.

"No, no," said Grace, an anxious shadow coming down upon her face; "you wont go this

long while yet. The schoolmaster axed everywhere round if you'd been seen ; but no one knowed you was here ; so he heard nothing. The bad fellow said at the castle you'd robbed him ; so I made bould to look in your bundle, and saw there was only a few bits of clothes in it."

"He is a villain !" said Alfred, flushing painfully.

"Don't think of him, cheeld-vean," returned Grace. "Tell me about Penkivel. Have you ever been there?"

"Once," said Alfred ; "that is when I saw Lady Crehylls. She was standing by her husband's tomb. I read the words on it, and thought it strange he should die at the same place where I lived once."

"And where was that?" asked Grace.

"Oh, a long way off," returned the small traveller ; "a beautiful place by the sea, in Italy."

"And who did you live with there?" asked Grace.

"I can't tell," he replied, a bewildered look covering his face at this question. "If I answered what I thought, I should say my father, but they have told me since, that is a dream the fever left with me."

"I call that mortal queer," said Grace, with eyes intent upon the young, earnest face. "If I

was you, my son, I wouldn't be cheated out of my memory by lies."

"Do you think I am cheated?" said Alfred, with a wistful look. "I thought so once myself till my father, and my sister Madeline took me to a beautiful palace, and there I saw a rich noble—the Duke de Briancourt,—who told me I had lived in it with him, when I was very young. Perhaps it was this visit to him, which lingered so long in my memory. And yet the palace was not the one I had dreamed of so often; neither was his the face I remember so well."

"Would you know the face again?" asked Grace, leaning her chin upon her hands, and regarding the child with a puzzled air.

"Oh yes," said Alfred, his eyes growing bright as she spoke. "I should know him anywhere. Do you think it is still living—that kind sorrowful face, that used to bend over me at night, and kiss me?"

"I am afraid not," returned Grace. "I'm thinking, sonny boy, if that kind face, whosever it may be, were not put under the sod, you would not be here this minute a little forlorn run-away. Don't cry, cheeld-vean. I want to hear who Madeline is."

"She is my eldest brother's widow," answered Alfred. "She is very beautiful. I wish she liked me," he said, sighing; "but I know she cannot bear even to see my face."

"If that's true, you've got queer relations," rejoined Grace. "Do you remember your mother?—can you tell me her name?"

The old bewildered look came back painfully to Alfred's face, as he replied, "No, I cannot remember her. They tell me she is dead, but my father—no, not my father, the friend, I mean, who you think is dead—he always told me my mother was living; and he used to promise I should go home one day to her at—at——"

Here the boy turned pale as death, and stretched his hand out faintly towards the listening woman.

"Are there two Penkivels in England?" he asked. "For the word he said was Penkivel. Oh Grace, it was indeed! I have lain awake at night, wondering why the name that I had lost would never, never come back to me, and now it has come suddenly, like lightning comes."

Grace threw her apron over her face, and behind that rampart she cried quietly some little time. The suspicion in her heart took away her breath, and she dared not speak it.

"There may be two Penkivels," she said, in a sobbing voice. "Tell me something more of your sister. I once knew a beautiful lady called Madeline. But for her, Lord Crehylls would never have gone away to die in a foreign land. Some people say he was beguiled by her wicked

beauty. I don't think that's true, neither does Michael, and he is Lord Crehylls' foster-brother, and always nearer and dearer to him than any friend in the world."

To this rather rambling story Alfred listened intently.

"I know so little of my sister Madeline," he said, "that I cannot tell you anything about her. Do you think she is the lady you knew once?"

"Well, yes, I do," answered Grace; "but Michael knew her better than I."

"Is he your brother? and why is his face so white and strange?" Then after a little pause, he added, "Who is Mathew Carbis?"

"So you heard all that was said on the day you lay by the fire like a little whisht corpse?" said Grace, anxiously.

"Yes, every word. And I should like to know why Michael is so pale, and why the cross is cut by the river side."

"That is a long tale to tell," said Grace; "and I am afraid——"

"You need not be afraid," said the boy. "I know Michael Polgrain wants to take me away on a cruise, lest I should tell that he is a smuggler; but I am no tell-tale."

"I am not afraid of your telling," returned Grace; "because I don't believe you would put the son of them that's been kind to you in prison,

but I think you had best go to sea for all that. Folks say at Crehylls, the schoolmaster is gone down to Penkivel to look for thee, and he means to stop for many a week at Penkivel church-town till you comes, he says. So wouldn't it be sensible to keep away till he is tired out, and gone back to his den, like the fox he is ? ”

This news made Alfred thoughtful. With all the patient resolution inherent in his nature, he had determined never to fall again into Whalley's hands. He would choose any life, rather than again make one, among that small cowed, miserable herd, whose abject lives were a continual and a degrading torture. His memory was filled with cruelties, horrors, sufferings past speech, which he had seen inflicted upon the helpless, shrinking companions of his misery, or which he had borne himself with that uncomplaining patience born of despair. Young as he was, Alfred knew, or rather felt, that the fruit of such teaching as Whalley's could only be cowardice, falsehood, and meanness ; and the instinct which bade him fly, was that voice in every noble mind which bids it save its soul alive. Sometimes there fell down upon his young heart a horrible suspicion, that this wicked man wanted to destroy him — was watching devilishly for the creeping into his spirit of all evil things, and his father knew this, and, looking on, only smiled. This fearful thought used to make him

tremble, and he often drove it away passionately ; yet it came again and again, and always stood before him, barring the way, when he would have gone to Madeline for succour. Then, as Grace told him Whalley would go to Penkivel, there crept upon him the fear that Lady Crehylls might give him up as Lord Crehylls had done, and on this there followed the thought, that it might be wise to put the sea between himself and his pursuer. What the earth denied to the fugitive the ocean gave, and every rolling billow would carry him further away from his enemy. And what if there came upon him at sea hardship, danger, and suffering ? they would come in shapes, that rouse the soul within a man to bravely fight, and bravely endure. The sea was a school which made heroes, and the teaching it gave was the foster-mother of honour, courage, and self-reliance ; but Whalley's school made cowards, and its teaching was the nurse of every vice, and its abject suffering the mother of dismal sin.

If these thoughts in the boy's mind were cloudy and unformed, they were nevertheless there, speaking in every shrinking instinct that evaded Whalley's touch, and crying out within his soul for a nobler, truer school than the miserable cheat, which called itself by that name beneath his dastard roof.

"I do not fear to go to sea," said Alfred,

looking in Grace's face ; "but I do fear to be with wicked men. Whalley is a wicked man,—that is why I ran away ; and I was going to Penkivel because Lady Crehylls is good. I like good people just as I like the sunshine."

"There is no harm in my boy Martin, except smuggling," returned Grace ; "and there's lots of Cornish folk don't count that a sin. I will say, Martin is as generous and brave a lad as ever stepped, only he's drawd away by a liking for adventure, and by love for his uncle. He'd go round the world with Michael in a hollow pumpkin, if 'twas big enough to hold 'un ; and as to Michael himself, he wouldn't wrong a worm by sea or land : and he would never have taken to this life, if it hadn't been for the blight that fell on him, ever since Walter Sherborne was tried for the murder of Mathew Carbis—that's what did it. He was driven out to sea because upon the land, he finds no rest for his troubled mind. The very day after the night, when they found you lying upon the cross, cut in the turf, where Mathew Carbis's body had lain, he thought he saw him : and he came here to this hearth and told it, with that haunted look upon his face, which makes folks feel afraid of him at times."

"Tell me all the story," cried Alfred, eagerly, with wide-open eyes shining with feverish wonder.

So Grace Chagwynne, as she knitted, told Alfred

this story, which we tell again, nearly in her own words, only modifying somewhat her quaint Cornish dialect, which else might need a glossary.

THE STORY OF MATHEW CARBIS.

It is about twenty-two or twenty-three years ago since a stranger, who looked like a gentleman—a broken-down gentleman, though—came to these parts, and asked was there narra house to let hereabouts, which would do for a quiet family. Now, about three miles from this, just where the river touches the sea, there stands upon the cliff a lonesome house, called St. Eglon's Hut. It was built long ago by the Crchyllses for a pleasure place, but there was never any pleasure in it that I could hear tell of. So it fell into decay; the owls built their nests in the chimneys, the snakes crawled in and out the verandah and parlours, the ceilings grew green with mildew, and the walls were yellow with damp. Yet the strange gentleman went to look at this house, and said, if my lord's steward would put it in order, he would take it. Well, this was done; but, with all the new paper and paint, it was a whisht place still. I was one of the women sent down to clean it, and the first thing I see'd in the hall was a great adder, half dead, which the workmen had killed in the morning; and this wasn't all, for on the hearth-

stone of the dining-room there stood a big toad, which spit at me when I tried to drive him away.

I had nothing but sorrow and fright all the time I was at the Hut, for in smoking out the owls I set fire to the chimney; it was full of nests and sticks,—and I called to Michael to help me, and he fired a gun up the chimney, and shot three young owls. Down they came tumbling on us, the sticks all afire that they brought down with them, and their big eyes glaring like onclean sperrets.

“There’s twenty-waun years’ ill-luck for me,” says Michael, as he turned ’em over with his foot. “I never killed an owl afore in all my life.”

You know it’s seven years’ ill-luck to him that kills an owl, so I was sorry Michael had done such a whisht thing.

There was a good bit of old-fashioned furniture in St. Eglon’s Hut, most of it piled away in the upper rooms, and all this was brought down now, and put in its proper place. This was scarcely done, when the gentleman and his family arrived. They were few enough—only himself, his wife, and child; no servants, no horses, not even a dog with them. But the lady startled me; she was so beautiful that it was hard to take one’s eyes off her face. Yet she had not a happy look about her; she was

restless, and the colour came and went on her cheeks every moment. She would flush and grow pale at a footstep, the shaking of a window, or the rattling of a door. She was peevish and cross to her little girl, who seemed afraid of her, and held her father tightly by the hand.

Mr. Walter Sherborne looked much older than his beautiful wife. She seemed scarcely more than five-and-twenty, while his haggard, handsome face, was certainly lined with forty years of care, and his hair was iron grey; yet he was as reckless and merry as a man of twenty; an unsuspecting, careless man; a loser in all he did, or tried to do; a man marked for ill-luck, yet too reckless for grief or for endeavour. The only creature he appeared to love was his child; his wife, perhaps, he scarcely dared to love, for she took no pains to hide from him her contempt, and the proud misery gnawing at her heart. She would sit listless all the day long, looking out upon the sea, great passionate tears welling up into her eyes, and falling unheeded on her clasped hands, which lay idle on her lap. She took no interest in her garden or her house, no interest in her husband or her child. All her days slipped by in blank, empty and forlorn as a wrecked ship, while she sat in wicked weariness, repining at her fate. She was too proud to quarrel; but their solitary servant has told me

that at times, when passion got the better of her pride, she would reproach him fiercely.

"I was forced to marry you," she said, one day. "You bought me of my father. And what have you bought? You cannot purchase one thought or feeling that I possess. I am no more yours now, than I was when I refused to be your wife, and told you that I hated you. Did you think that those who sold me could sell, too, my love, my tenderness? Did you think, in buying me, you had bought a wife's heart, a wife's duty? If so, you have miserably deceived yourself!"

"How dare you speak to me like this?" cried her husband. "If I were not a ruined man, you would not do it."

At this she laughed, and said bitterly, "True, I was married to your money, was I not? And I was faithful to it, civil to it, kind to it, while it lasted. Speak! was it to you or to your wealth that my father wedded me? There was no talk of you at all; the sermon ran thus: 'His rank, his position, his wealth, the honour, safety, deference, and troops of friends these will bring you, are worth a sacrifice of mere foolish feeling.' And I listened, being coerced and desperate; and I married these, not you. But they are all gone now, and I find nothing in the bond bidding me love you, the ruined gambler, who has flung away estate and happiness. Give me back

the things I married, and I'll be a civil wife again. Where are the comforts and the troops of friends that should be mine? And as to safety and honour"—here she laughed again—"no gamester can hold those shields around his wretched wife a moment. The first rattle of the dice-box shakes them down."

"Take care!" said Walter Sherborne, "I can at least defend my own honour. Do you fancy I have not heard of your stolen walks with that silly boy, that unfledged lordling, Crehylls?"

"And what then?" she answered. "You are welcome to call him out if you will. The boy is nothing to me."

"I will not oblige you by getting shot," returned her husband. "A pistol in a boy's hand is as strong to kill as in a man's grasp. There are other ways in which I can revenge myself on Lord Crehylls."

He rose and strode away, and Janniper Baragwanath, who was listening with all her might, started off like a hare fearing she'd be caught.

Lord Crehylls and his brother, the present lord, were orphans, and Mr. Lanyon of Penkivel was their guardian. He was as fond of the lads as if they were his own, and he was sore grieved when he found young Lord Crehylls was so taken with Mrs. Sherborne's beauty, that he made himself her shadow, haunting St. Eglon's day by day in the hopes of getting a word or look from

her, as she passed him. She was a wicked lady, or she would never have encouraged the admiration of a boy, whom one honest, kindly word would have made her friend, not her lover. But she flattered him, and the poor lad fancied he was bound to lay down his life for her, if she asked it.

Thus things stood when a visitor arrived at St. Eglon's Hut. He was a young man, keen and sharp, with restless eyes, a pale face, a massive jaw, and thin lips. Some called him handsome, but Janniper and I said he was ugly, and we say it still. He came upon Mr. Sherborne suddenly, as he was walking in the garden, holding his child by the hand, and he called out to him in a merry voice, "Hollo, Sherborne!"

Turning sharply to look at him, Mr. Sherborne grew white to the lips.

"Is it you, Carbis?" he answered. "How could you find me out in this wilderness?"

"I found you through Mrs. Sherborne," returned Carbis, carelessly.

"Through my wife?" said Mr. Sherborne, biting his lip.

"Yes," replied the other, in an easy way, "and by the merest chance, too. I was staying at Dartmouth with my cousin the parson, when a packman—a hawker fellow—comes in with watches and trinkets for sale: a most amusing dog he was, with a tongue that never tired,

smooth as oil and flattering as honey. So at last he tells my cousin Jessie she is the loveliest lady he has ever seen, except one. Woman-like, she is curious to know who that one is. 'It is a lady I saw in Cornwall,' he says; 'I travel from Northumberland to Cornwall with my pack, and I see nowhere such a face as hers.' 'Is she Cornish?' I ask him. 'No sir,' he said, 'she and her husband are strangers there, so the people told me.' 'I'll bet my life it's Mrs. Sherborne,' I cried. 'That's her name, sir,' answers the hawker, much amazed. So you see, Sherborne, when a man has such a wife as yours, he can't hide. Being bored to death at the parson's, I put myself on my horse, and, in spite of bad roads, and shafts, and footpads, here I am. Haven't you a boy to take my hack?"

"No," said Mr. Sherborne, savagely, "I am a beggar, and you know it."

But my brother Michael, who was working in the garden, and heard all this, came forward now, and led the horse to the stable. As he went he saw the new-comer strike Mr. Sherborne heartily on the shoulder, and shake hands with him again and again. Nevertheless, there was a false ring in his voice, which made Michael think him secretly an enemy to the man, whom he greeted with so much affection. And some little time after this, when he was talking of Mr. Sherborne's visitor to me, he said, "Grace, there

is a more poisonous snake crept into St. Eglon's Hut now, than arra one we killed, when we set the place in order. I wish they had never let the Hut to these strange folks. There will sorrow come of it, mark my words if there don't."

Michael used to work at the Hut a good deal, for he and Janniper were courting like then, so I mostly heard all that was going on from one or the other of them.

Mr. Sherborne and Mathew Carbis were good friends now, any one saw that. They fished, they rode, they walked together, they sat up late drinking and playing cards; and in one thing especially they both agreed: they both hated the poor lad who still haunted Mrs. Sherborne with his boyish, respectful love.

"Walter, if I were you, I'd be revenged on the proud young imp," Janniper heard Mathew Carbis say. "See, how he avoids you and me—he and Mr. Lanyon too. We are not good enough for them. Yet he can follow your wife like a cur, as he is, and pester her with his insolent attentions. Ah, I wish you and I were in power in France just now, and had a goodly batch of these useless aristocrats beneath our thumb."

"I wish we had," said Walter Sherborne, with an oath, as his fist struck the table with a sounding blow.

As for Mrs. Sherborne,—Janniper told me she

rarely joined her husband and his guest. She sat, as was her wont, at an upper window, with her hands folded in her lap, and her wild eyes gazing out at sea ; and if she spoke of Mathew Carbis to Mr. Sherborne, it was only to abuse him, to say she hated him, and to ask passionately when she was to be rid of his odious presence.

When Janniper heard such words as these, she trembled at the lady's deceit and wickedness, for she knew that when Walter Sherborne was not by, these two whispered together and held each other's hands, and looked in each other's eyes as lovers look. Yet Mrs. Sherborne had some strange dread upon her mind of that crafty man, for Janniper found her once upon her knees, with her hands clasped, and arms stretched out towards the sea.

“ ‘ Oh that I had wings like a dove !’ she said, wildly, in the words of the Psalmist, “ ‘ for then would I fly away and be at rest.’ ” Janniper, if I could fly across that dreary sea, I might be saved, but I am chained here, and the net of the fowler is around me.” Then she leant her head upon Janniper's honest hands, and wept aloud. “ I am like one standing between two fires,” she said ; “ on either side of me is destruction. If I stay here I shall perish by my own hand, or Mr. Sherborne will kill me. Last night, being mad with drink, he held a pistol to my

temple, and said the laws were bad, that they did not let a man shoot an unruly wife. Then he flung the weapon down, and struck me with his hand. Janniper, I can never forgive a blow—never! And yet if I go—if I listen——oh! where is the arm that will succour me, where is the tongue that can give me counsel?"

"Have you no friends?" asked Janniper, pitifully.

"Over the sea," she said, wringing her hands together. "I have a brother and a little sister, whose faces I shall never see again. Mr. Sherborne was a proud man when I married him, and he gave my father money to go away to a distant land. But he did not live long after he had settled there. Heaven help me! I have no friends now."

"Go over the sea to your brother," said Janniper, bravely; "or else try at home to be a more loving wife."

She shook her head at these last words, and said, "It is too late for that!"

"Master is worse since Mr. Carbis came," continued Janniper, looking in her face; "why don't you make him go away?"

"I dare not whisper such a thing," she cried, clinging to the girl. "Mr. Sherborne owes Mathew Carbis more money, than he has in the world to pay him."

"And the longer he stays the more he'll owe

him," returned Janniper, "for they play every night, and master always loses."

"Then I stand between a madman and a traitor," she said, covering her beautiful face with her trembling hands. "Oh, Janniper, the great wide sea bars my way to peace. If I could but cross it, I should be safe. There are some fates which we must flee, and some which we must fight. But I can neither fight nor fly. So I shall live to be a world's wonder, and die as the wicked die, without a prayer."

For some little time after the talk I have been telling you about, Janniper noticed Mrs. Sherborne was colder to Mathew Carbis ; but he soon persuaded her that he only played with Mr. Sherborne to keep him from the wine bottle, not to win his money. Thus the wicked lover made his peace, and again they whispered together, she with a white, frightened face, he with a crafty look of triumph.

Frightened at seeing this, Janniper spoke of it to Michael, and he told it again to young Lord Crehylls, hoping that poor boy would see the wickedness and folly of loving Walter Sherborne's wife. But, blinded by her beauty, and meaning no disloyalty himself, he could not believe in treachery, so he took her part warmly, and Michael's daily warnings only vexed him.

"See here, Michael," he said : "I would not wrong that beautiful lady in word or thought,

for all the glory the world can offer me ; and I will never let her be wronged by another. If this man Carbis, this false friend of her husband's, dares to insult her, he shall answer for it to me."

Now Michael loved Lord Crehylls as he did his life, for although one was a lord, and the other only a poor lad, yet they had slept in the same cradle, and been nursed on the same bosom. They were foster-brothers, and considering the difference in their rank, I don't think real brothers could have loved each other more. So it grieved Michael almost to death, to see the poor lad running his soul into sin, for this unhappy lady. Being a month older than Lord Crehylls, he thought he had a right to advise him.

"But I tell you my love is no sin, Michael," he would say ; "for I would not tell her of it, if I could. To me she is like a lily set upon a rock, which I may admire at a distance, but never climb up thither to gather, or touch with my lips."

"You are mistaken," Michael would answer ; "and sin will surely come of it, unless you flee away from this place."

Now about this time the hawker, or pedlar, as some call him, came to our church-town, and he went up to Castle Crehylls, and showed his jewels ; and after that he came to St. Eglon's

Hut; and Mr. Sherborne bought a pair of ear rings for Janniper, and a brooch for his little daughter, telling him, as he left, to come again, and may be they would make a deal. Janniper knew what this meant, for she had overheard the man say, he bought old jewels, and she had seen Mr. Sherborne fetch from his chamber an old-fashioned watch, and a necklace of flashing crystals; but he had not offered enough for them, and they were put away again. She guessed by this, that her master wanted money sorely.

That same day Lord Crehylls, walking alone in the wood, had come suddenly on Mathew Carbis and Mrs. Sherborne as they stood together, talking so earnestly that they never heard his footstep.

"No, no," said Mrs. Sherborne. "I cannot,—I will not. I will go to America. I will find my brother."

"You are mad to refuse," returned Carbis, snatching at her hand, and drawing her towards him,—“it is your fate——”

But at this moment she caught sight of Lord Crehylls, and starting back hastily, she cried, "Unhand me, Mr. Carbis! You forget yourself, sir. I will not be insulted."

White as death the man leant against a tree, and glanced at the stripling, who came forward and offered Mrs. Sherborne his protection.

"Madam, permit me to escort you to St. Eglon's," he said. "That man is a coward indeed who could insult you."

Carbis bit his lip, but restrained his passion.

"Lord Crehylls, we shall meet again one day," was all he said, as a half smile twitched his thin mouth. Then he lifted his hat to Mrs. Sherborne, and allowed her to depart, leaning on the arm of the inexperienced boy, whom she had bewildered by her beauty.

Whether she was really angry with her crafty lover, and feared his passion and his power, or whether she was only acting a play to save herself, and deceive the young Lord Crehylls, I cannot say. I only know from this time he was more her champion than ever. And when he told all this scene to Michael, he said triumphantly that no one should utter another calumny in his hearing, respecting Mrs. Sherborne and Mathew Carbis. All the country-side talked of these two now, wondering at Mr. Sherborne's blindness; and Michael, warned by Janniper, had often entreated the young lord to free himself from his foolish faith in a woman, who was betraying her husband.

Michael then was much relieved in mind, when Mr. Lanyon, sending for him to the Castle, told him he had arranged a long cruise for young Lord Crehylls, in one of His Majesty's frigates then in Plymouth Sound with the fleet.

“And since among all his friends and tenants there is no heart so knit to him as yours, Michael,” said Mr. Lanyon, “I wish you to ride with him to Plymouth, and see him safe on board.”

“I’d go through fire and water for him, your honour,” returned Michael. “And I’m powerfully glad he is going far away from them, that would do him hurt.”

The evening they departed comes back upon my mind, as clear as though it was but yesterday. The young lord scarce spoke a word in going, and Michael, too, was whisht and silent as a graveyard. They had been together most all the day, wandering up and down the woods, roving close round St. Eglon’s Hut; but never once catching sight of the beautiful face which, like an evil spell, worked woe upon all who looked upon it.

There had been a terrible quarrel at the Hut that day, and Janniper, trembling as she listened, felt sure that Walter Sherborne had at last put his foot upon the viper, who, with seeming friendship, had crawled to his hearth. But the words that were uttered came so furiously and fast, that she dared not creep near enough to hear them; yet she thought she could not be mistaken when she saw Carbis, with malice and hate upon his white face, creep stealthily from the house alone, and plunge into the wood.

“He is gone for ever,” she said to herself. “He’ll never come within these doors again.”

Soon after this she heard her master lock himself in his own room, and he had been there an hour, when the pedlar came up the wild and weedy garden, and asked for him. But when she knocked at Walter Sherborne’s door, and told him this, he sent a bitter oath through the panels at her teeth, and bade her tell the man he would not sell the jewels now ; he had disposed of them other ways.

“It’s all one to me,” returned the hawker, carelessly. “But wont the lady look at my wares?”

Then, catching sight of that dreary, lovely face at the window, he hastened to undo his pack, and, opening the lid of the jewel-case, the sun lighted upon the gems, sending sparkling rays and brilliant flames of many-coloured fires flashing upwards, between her and him. Yet they could not turn her eyes from the sea. She shook her head wearily, and never looked again ; but Janniper saw at another window the face of Walter Sherborne, wearing a haggard and dreadful look,—a look which was gone in an instant, as a flash of lightning vanishes even as you see it ; then, perceiving he was observed, he flung up the sash with the hand of a madman.

“Begone !” he cried, angrily. “Why do you come here, flashing your devil’s wares in a man’s sight?”

"No offence, sir, I hope?" said the pedlar, locking the box hurriedly, then departing with a sturdy step through the tangled weeds of the wasted garden.

Janniper, being somewhat frightened, hastened back to her kitchen, from whence she saw her master hurrying down the cliff to the sea. He had a greatcoat on, though the time was autumn and the weather sultry. His little daughter, who was prattling by Janniper's side, clambered to the casement and called after him, "Papa! papa! if you are going upon the sea, take me with you."

The ruined, wretched gentleman turned his head at her voice, and tried to smile.

"It is too rough for rowing," he cried. "You cannot come."

Now the sea was like glass, and through all the air there brooded that dead calm, which is but the stillness of the tempest, as it gathers its breath together.

"I hope your papa is not going for a sail," said Janniper, "for there'll be a terrible storm afore night."

Yet when the sun set with crimson flashes in the sky, the wings of the storm still brooded silently on the earth; and it was not till darkness fell that distant peals of thunder, and sullen drops of rain, came like notes of warning to tell of the coming strife.

As Janniper sat alone that night, listening to the moan of the sea and the roll of the pealing thunder, there stole upon her unawares the slight form of her beautiful mistress. She was dressed for walking, and she carried a little packet. Then, as Janniper gazed at her bewildered, she clutched her by the arm, and the girl felt through her fevered clasp that she was trembling from head to foot.

"Janniper," she said, wistfully, "I am going. You will never see my face again."

"Going!" cried Janniper, gasping for breath.

"Yes; I am going over the sea," she answered. "I have found that my jewels will pay my passage. Janniper, he and the child will be better without me. I have wished the little one good-bye in her sleep. Her father wants no farewell from me; and I leave him the child, the only thing he loves. I would not be so cruel as to take her from him; yet it is a terrible wrench to leave her. I am not all heartless—God knows it."

She broke down, and wept a moment, then dashed her tears away.

"There is no time for this folly," she said. "Janniper, I know I can trust you, but if you fear being questioned when your master returns, go home to your mother's, and do not come back till morning; then say I gave you leave to stay away."

Janniper was crying bitterly, and could scarcely answer her.

"Going?" she faltered. "But are you going in safe company? And will that oogly man, Mr. Carbis, come back here?"

"No, never," she said. "And do not fear for me, Janniper. I am going with a friend who will see me safe to the ship. Oh, this sea, this deep, wide sea," she cried, stretching her arms out longingly towards the cliffs, "how I yearn to cross it, and put its rolling waters between me and my sins and troubles! I go to a new life, Janniper; pray for me that it may be a better one than the life I leave."

Then she stooped and kissed her on the lips.

"I am full of forebodings," she said. "I feel as though no good woman's lips would ever touch mine again. Now, Janniper, will you go? Then you will be spared the pain of seeing me leave. Go at once; for I must hurry away, lest Mr. Sherborne return and stop me."

Oh, how Janniper prayed that he might come! Then she thought, "I will throw my arms around them both, and pray them, for the love of God, and of their little child, to be reconciled one to the other."

But her prayer was not granted, and as she went up through St. Eglon's wood, she saw Mrs. Sherborne standing beneath the dripping

trees in the wild garden, with hand shading her eyes, gazing out upon the roughened sea.

The storm was over about ten o'clock, and then Janniper, frightened about the child, resolved to return to the Hut. I went with her, and we tried first to go through the wood; but the stream was swollen to a torrent, we could not cross it, and we had to go back over many a fallen tree, to the high road, and go round that way to the house. It was eleven when we reached it. The door was still unfastened as Janniper had left it; in the kitchen the fire had died out, and all was blank darkness and silence. When she clutched the tinder-box and struck a light, we searched through the house and found it empty, except for the little child who was sleeping as peaceful as a babe.

"Where can master be, and where is Mr. Carbis?" said Janniper, in a whisper.

I had no answer to give her, and so we two lighted the fire and sat down by it, telling up the dismallest stories till well-nigh upon two o'clock, when Mr. Sherborne's voice brought us to our feet, as scared as though the dead had called us.

"Where is Mr. Carbis?" were the first words he said, as we opened the door to him.

"He is not here, sir," answered Janniper.

Then, as the candle flashed upon his face, I saw it working in a ghastly manner, and

he reeled against the wall like a drunken man.

"Not here !" he said. "Then where can he be gone ? I have searched for him these hours past. Is your mistress in her room ?"

Then Janniper had to tell that she was gone, while Mr. Sherborne listened as one in a dream, dimly comprehending what he heard.

"She gave me leave to go to mother's," said Janniper, "and when I returned, the door was ajar, the fire out, and the house empty."

"She has fled with that cur Crehylls !" cried Mr. Sherborne.

"No, sir !" I answered, angrily. "Lord Crehylls and my brother have gone to Plymouth ; and he is but a boy, and too good and honourable to steal your wife from you, even were he old enough to dare do such a deed. Janniper says Mrs. Sherborne is gone to America to her friends."

"That's a lie !" he answered, slowly.

"Then where is Mr. Carbis ?" I cried. "She is gone with him, maybe."

In answer, Mr. Sherborne used strange words, which came against him at his trial.

"With Carbis ?" he said. "No, no. I know better than that. There, there, if she is gone with Carbis, I forgive her. We'll find her dead some day if she is with him. There's murder in the air about that man."

Then he fell back on his chair, and all the grief and horror rustling in his speech and aspect broke forth, first in a wild laugh, then in a gush of tears. We fetched him brandy; and, as he held out his shaking hand to take the glass, I saw blood upon his cuff, and his wristband all stained red. I started back; and then he turned up his sleeve, and looked upon the blood-spot.

"It is nothing," he said: "only a scratch I got upon the cliff. I thought to have fallen into the sea when I slipped; but I seized a bush—a prickly one—and saved myself. There—pester me no more. I'll go to bed, and sleep, if I can."

He went to his room; but when the autumn morning came in with rain and mist, he was still pacing his chamber.

Far and near people talked of Mrs. Sherborne's elopement, wondering if she had indeed sailed across the sea, or was gone, like a guilty woman, with her wicked lover, the missing Carbis.

Thus a few days went by,—the forsaken husband, shut up in loneliness the while, speaking to no one—and then a little girl, a woodman's daughter, bringing her father's dinner to him in the wood, called to him from the brook side: "Father, father, here's a dead man washed ashore!"

Upon this, the woodman flung down his axe, and rushed towards her, down the steep brake to the river's brink; and there, lying on the soft, green

moss, was the body of a murdered man. Kneeling by his side, the woodman saw the great gash upon his temple, which had let his life out, and beheld his face broken and bruised as with a rock.

"'Tis some poor gentleman drowned at sea, and washed up the river by the tide," said the woodman, pitifully. "Come away, child. He's a ghastly sight; he's been in the water so long."

But the little girl stood by the body still.

"Who is it, father?" she whispered.

"Who can tell?" said the man, leaning over the dreadful sight again. "Maybe there was a wreck out at sea in that storm the other night; and yet I never heard tell of any poor wrecked creature being washed up the cove so high as this. At all events, it is a gentleman; poor men don't wear clothes like these, and his hands have never done hard work."

He lifted one hand from the grass, and with it there rose a sparkle, like a drop of fire fallen from the sun.

"What's that?" said the woodman, bending low.

"Father, it's a ring! Father, it is Mr. Carbis's ring!" cried the girl. "I saw him seal a letter with it that day I took some flower roots to the lady. I carried the letter to the post for him, and on the wax there was a bird, with an adder coiled around it. Yes, yes! here's the same upon the ring."

It was true. Nor was this the only proof. The dead man's watch and chain were in his pocket, and his linen was marked with his name in full, "Mathew Carbis."

It was plain, then, he was not killed for robbery, but for revenge and hate. And who had such cause to hate him as Walter Sherborne? The bitter quarrel between them on the day that he was missed was remembered, and Mr. Sherborne's absence for many hours, and his return home at night with blood upon his wrist were counted as still stronger proofs against him. All this Janniper and I had to tell, both of us unwillingly, for we knew Mathew Carbis to be an evil man, and thought his wicked love cause enough to bring a just death upon his head, from the hand of his wronged friend.

My brother, Michael Polgrain, came home on the day that Mr. Sherborne was condemned, and when he heard the news, he seized me by both my hands and fixed his eyes upon my face without speaking a word.

"Michael! Michael!" I cried. "Art thee gone mad?"

Then he staggered to a chair, and his voice was but a whisper, when he said, at last, "Mr. Carbis dead!—found murdered by the river!—and Mr. Sherborne tried for his life. I can never rest again if this be true. And the ship has sailed, sister—the ship has sailed."

“Thank God, it has,” I answered ; “for this would be ill news for young Lord Crehylls.”

“Terrible news for him,” said Michael. And fixing his eyes on me again, all the colour went slowly, slowly from his face, leaving it like a dead man’s. You see he was but a lad, and his pity and his horror were both greater than his strength.

At first there was a double fear through the country, people thinking the pedlar was murdered too ; for he was missing from his lodgings since the day he had come to St. Eglon’s Hut. But luckily all suspicion of foul play respecting him was soon removed ; for a farmer had met him many miles away upon the road, walking fast, with his pack as usual on his shoulders. Some miners coming late at night from Bâl had seen him also. There was a woman with him then ; but he was alone when the farmer saw him, so the woman might have been some labourer’s wife, with whom he talked as he went along. Thinking he might have seen Mr. Sherborne in the wood, and could perhaps give useful evidence, the magistrates searched and advertised for him far and near ; but if he saw the advertisements, he never heeded them, and he has never visited these parts again from that day to this ; neither has any news ever reached us of Mrs. Sherborne. Whatever her fate may be, it remains a mystery to this hour.

As for her most unhappy husband, he was tried at the sessions for the murder, and found

guilty, and he died by his own hand in prison three days afterwards. His little daughter was taken to him after he was condemned, and I have heard say his farewell of her was a heartrending sight. Michael also went to see him; but beyond these two, there was not a friend, or relative to comfort the forlorn man in his last hours. He died impenitent, protesting his innocence to the last. None believed him, though there were not wanting tongues, who blamed Mr. Lanyon for the haste, with which he hurried on the trial. He was the magistrate that committed him, and the one who hunted up evidence against him. Some thought he did it for Lord Crehylls's sake, fearing if Mr. Sherborne escaped there would be a duel between these two, as in prison he had been wicked enough to say, he knew his wife was gone abroad with the young lord. Many a time there has lain a doubt upon my own mind whether, or no this was true. The doubt came through Michael's grief and pain, which were so dreadful that he scarce seemed in his right mind. And it is plain enough to this day, that he knows more than he will ever tell to any living soul on earth. He was the only one that believed Mr. Sherborne innocent, and this belief has so preyed on his mind, that ever since his death Michael has never seen the sun. No matter how bright the day may be, he goes along gropingly, not blind, but seeing all things as

through a veil, dull and grey as his own face. This, we say in Cornwall, is the fate of the man who swears away falsely the life of another, but Michael was never called on to speak at Mr. Sherborne's trial. What could he have to tell, when, on the very day of the murder, he had ridden away with Lord Crehylls?

Janniper and I were witnesses, and I swear we told the truth as plainly, and as kindly as we could. It was not our evidence that condemned Mr. Sherborne,—it was the testimony of a poor thatcher, who on that day was mending a cottage roof. From this height he saw Mathew Carbis enter the wood; next he saw the pedlar pass, and gave him "Good day;" then, an hour afterwards, came Mr. Sherborne, walking hurriedly, with his greatcoat on, and a stout stick in his hand; and he, too, plunged into the wood. Of these three men the thatcher only saw two return: the pedlar first, who went up the pathway through the fields, whistling, as he often did, as he walked. He had evidently crossed the wood by the path running through it; but not so Mr. Sherborne, for he emerged on the same side by which he entered, and, crouching beneath the hedge, ran warily until he reached an old shaft, round which there lay great moorstones, piled up high. Here the thatcher, whose eye pursued him in the dusk, lost him for a moment; and when he appeared again, he saw

he was without his greatcoat and stick. He thought this somewhat strange, and talked of it to his neighbours. Thus when the body of Carbis was discovered, and suspicion pointed to Mr. Sherborne, search was made beneath the moor-stones; and finding nothing there, ropes and ladders were procured, and the old shaft explored. Here they found the coat and stick—one floating in the water, the other caught by a projecting rock. It was blood-stained, and one of its many capes was torn away, as though in a great struggle.

Mr. Sherborne could give no explanation of the blood stains, neither would he name his reason for flinging the coat down the old shaft. He simply denied the murder, but would not render an account of his time, during his long absence from home that evening and night. In fact, he had no defence to bring forward, and throughout his trial he seemed like a man overwhelmed by his own guilt, and utterly broken down, bewildered — stunned, as it were — by the speedy discovery and punishment of his crime.

With such frightful evidence before them, the jury could only return one verdict, and Mr. Sherborne was condemned to be executed at Bodmin, three days after the sentence. Not one soul throughout the county believed him innocent except my brother Michael; and why such

a whisht fancy should work in his brain to this day, I can never tell.

Mr. Lanyon was very good to the forlorn little orphan, who lay weeping and friendless at St. Eglon's Hut. Finding no relative of her father's willing to take her, he sent her up to London to school, but what became of her when she grew up I cannot say.

Lord Crehylls did not return home till all the talk about this terrible story had died away. He was a man then, and he did not like to hear a word said concerning his foolish boy-love for Mrs. Sherborne, the more especially as he was Miss Lanyon's lover now. She was a good and lovely lady, and the heiress of Penkivel and much wealth besides. When she and Lord Crehylls married, all the country, gentle and simple, was pleased, and wished them joy with one voice. And never did a young couple begin life with more love for each other, or a greater prospect of happiness; yet in a few years all was shattered, and both were left a wreck.

Old Mr. Lanyon had a ward, a young lady of great beauty, named Madeline Sylvester. She and Lady Crehylls were no great friends, yet she came often to the castle, or they met at Penkivel, when the young couple went down there to stay. Miss Sylvester had a lover, a gallant gentleman, who, through years of patient love, had hoped on till he won her consent to be his wife; but, like

a cake of thin ice, all was treacherous when it seemed most smooth. Miss Sylvester left the castle on the very day that Lord Crehylls deserted his wife, leaving her desolate and broken-hearted. Where she went, or what became of her, has never been known down here. We only knew that her lover came to the castle in great grief, and told Lady Crehylls she was lost to him for ever. My lady laid upon her all the blame of her husband's cruel departure, and even fancied that she had stolen her child. But she knew afterwards the boy was with his father. He should not have taken from his wife the one little comforter, who might have solaced her misery, but I do not think the blame of that lies with Miss Sylvester; yet Mr. Lanyon's illness does, for I took the letter to him myself which struck him down with paralysis, and he was never sensible again.

What Lady Crehylls felt, when she found herself bereaved both of husband and child, none could dare guess. Her grief would not bear comforting. She wandered about alone through the park at Crehylls, looking pale and hollow-eyed as a spectre. The friends that pressed around her, she would not see or speak with. They blamed her husband, and her love for him—which has lived through all his cruelty—made their consolations a torture. She soon left the castle and went down to Penkivel, where she

solaced her father's declining days, and where she has lived ever since. She and sorrow have never parted company ; for soon after her father's death news came to her that her boy was drowned, then her husband died, and was brought to Penkivel to be buried. People say it was his dying wish to lie there, rather than with his forefathers at Crehylls. So perhaps on his death-bed his love went back to his wife, and he yearned in death to be near the true heart, that he had forsaken in life.

Each sad event that has occurred to him has brought again to men's lips the story of Mathew Carbis, and Walter Sherborne. When Lord Crehylls forsook his fair young wife and became an exile, as some thought for Miss Sylvester's sake, people said of him that he was a feeble man, given to foolish loves from his boyhood. When he died, they remarked that his age and Walter Sherborne's were the same ; and they wondered if any remembrance of that unhappy man had intruded on his dying thoughts. Listening to such talk as this, I have seen my brother Michael's white face grow grey as ashes ; for in all the sorrows of Lord Crehylls he has borne a part and shared the suffering. Often he has hinted to me dimly, that when all secrets are revealed it will be known, that Lord Crehylls was not so guilty as the world supposed when he deserted his wife at Madeline Sylvester's command.

With these words Grace Chagwynne's story ended.

Alfred Singleton listened intently to this history, which Grace told at intervals, taking it up like broken threads while she sat at her knitting and the boy, as he listened, fancied much of it had come to him long ago in dreams. Then as the story grew and lengthened, there arose in his mind indistinct words and shadows, through which the names of Carbis and Sherborne came to him, mingled with tears and sobs, and the prayers of a weary man; or, turning calmly, proudly away from his own small clinging hands, his memory recalled the pale beautiful face of Madeline, tearless and unpitiful.

"Did Lord Crehylls die at Naples?" he asked, fixing his wistful eyes on Grace.

"Yes," she answered, glancing at him with a strange look; "and the name of the woman whose memory must have made his dying pillow bitter, was Madeline."

"Madeline," repeated the boy, as his thin hands fell into his lap in hopeless patience; "and through her Lady Crehylls lost both husband and child?"

"Yes," returned Grace; "an only child, and a husband, dearly loved. Through her, while they both lived, she was a widow, and childless; through her, when they died, she never smoothed their dying pillow, never heard their last words,

never had their last kiss. Her boy perished in a foreign land, and her husband came back to her dead."

Alfred Singleton heard this, and lifted his steadfast eyes to Grace's face.

"I will not go to Penkivel," he said, gently. "I think it would be cruel to go there. Michael Polgrain has loved Lord Crehylls like a true friend all his life long. I think he will be kind to me. I will go to sea with him, if he will take me."

"Never fear," returned Grace, "he will take thee, child, and be the truest friend that ever orphan had."

Michael Polgrain, whose heart yearned strangely towards the friendless boy, was well content when his sister made known to him the child's request.

"I'll take him a voyage or two," he said, "for his health's sake. The boy would die upon the land, that's plain."

So, in a few days more, the little Alfred was far away upon the sea, saved from the cruel clutch of Mr. Whalley, and beyond the reach of the desperate search made for him by Madeline Singleton.

CHAPTER V.



ELL, I have been to Devonshire, and seen Whalley," said Mr. Rathline, flinging himself on a couch in the parlour of an inn where he and Madeline met at times; "and the boy is not found, nor likely to be found."

"You went to your friend, Whalley, not believing me," observed Madeline, quietly. "It was for this journey you demanded money. I knew it all the time."

"And what then?" asked Mr. Rathline. "I am not the sort of fellow to take a woman's word for anything. If Alfred dies, you come into a pretty heap of money. I know that."

Madeline despised the man too much to be indignant at this insinuation, but she looked him calmly in the face.

"If I covet the fortune," she said, "which Tom willed should fall to me on Alfred's death, why did I not take it when—when the boat went down?"

"Because I did not let you," replied Mr. Rathline, tapping his boots with his tasselled

cane, and laughing triumphantly. "I hid the child at the house of your devoted admirer, De Briancourt, and prepared you for the truth gradually."

Madeline rose, and paced the room. Her face was death white, and full of anguish.

"Are your nerves giving way?" asked Mr. Rathline, sneeringly. "The whole thing is safe enough, if you don't peach. There is only one person we have to be afraid of, and that is Alice. But she is not likely to see the boy."

Madeline made no answer to this; but she asked, abruptly, "What did Whalley tell you?"

"He said there was no tidings of the lad in the West," replied Mr. Rathline; "neither at Crehylls or Penkivel."

"I shall go and search for him myself," said Madeline.

Mr. Rathline looked at her suspiciously. "She is repenting," he thought to himself, "and she means to make a scapegoat of me; but she shall find herself mistaken."

"It is useless looking for him," he said. "I believe the boy is dead. All the money is in your own hands; give me half of it, and let us make an end of the matter."

Madeline looked at the man with weary eyes.

"Do you fancy me so weak?" she said, scornfully. "Who has benefited by the poor child's life but Richard Rathline? But Richard Rath-

line shall not benefit by his death. If the boy be really dead, I will never give you another penny."

"Oh, come," said the swaggerer, contemptuously, "I know better than that. If you indulge yourself in that sort of talk, I shall demand three-fourths of Tom's money, instead of half."

"The fortune left to Alfred Singleton shall never be touched by your grasping hands," said Madeline, firmly. "In what I have done I have always meant justice, not robbery. I save every penny of the income, and I add to it every year. I work, I sing, I act only for that; and I will never rest till I have made the boy's fortune equal to the one he would have had if——"

"Why not let him have his own, then?" interrupted Mr. Rathline, savagely. "When I told you the truth, two days after Tom's death, it was not too late. You might have restored the boy to the paternal arms in the style you are used to on the stage, and have received my lord's blessing, and my lady's also."

This taunt made Madeline snow white. She held the back of the chair by which she stood, with both hands, thus steadying herself to speak calmly.

"You do not understand me," she said. "How can I think to be understood by a man like you? When you told me who the child

was that my husband died to save, I cried out, this was another dreadful injustice, and there was no God in the world; but when you went on to divulge your scheme to me, I fancied I saw in it a retribution. Groping blindly for the justice I love, I imagined it was placed now miraculously in my hands. As they had meted out to me, so would I measure to them. They had reared me under a false name, with a cloud of shame about me; I would do the same for him. They had filled my childish imagination with terrors of a father, whom they falsely called vile; I would give their child a father really vile—a father at whose remembrance he should shudder, as I did at mine.”

“I am much obliged to you,” said Mr. Rathline, coldly; “but I flatter myself the boy rather likes me.”

Madeline, however, did not heed him.

“But through all this, I never meant to do less for him than Mr. Lanyon did for me,” she continued. “I meant to educate him, and give him a fortune as great as the one he has lost. It never entered into my scheme of justice to let the boy be a homeless vagabond upon the earth—an outcast given up to crime. So he must be found, Richard Rathline; he must, he shall be found!”

“I tell you I believe he is dead,” repeated Mr. Rathline. “And a good thing too; the

whole matter will be off one's conscience now."

Madeline wrung her hands together hopelessly.

"You deceived me about the school," she said; "your friend Whalley is a cruel villain. But for his ill-treatment the boy would not have run away."

"I was obliged to put the child with a friend who would not ask questions," returned Mr. Rathline, sulkily. "Come, my question is the money question. I want to get back to that."

"You are a vulture who is never satisfied," replied Madeline, fiercely. "I have worked incessantly to supply your needs, but you shall not make me rob for you."

"Nonsense : if the boy is dead the money is yours. I wonder you are so squeamish," observed Mr. Rathline. "I call this little plot something beyond robbery."

"It is justice. And I wish it to be neither more nor less than justice," said Madeline, walking up and down the room swiftly. "It is you who give it a dress of villany, as you do everything you touch."

"I call things by their right names," returned Mr. Rathline, with a low whistle, "and you'll find the lawyers at the Old Bailey will do the same."

"Do you think the Crehylls would ever dare

accuse me of wrong towards them?" cried Madeline, turning on him fiercely. "Have I no wrongs? Where is my father lying now through the villany of the Crehylls and the Lanyons? I tell you his blood always cries to me from that prison ground to avenge him, and I will. I am not afraid to take justice into my own hands; they had no fears when they took injustice into theirs. Human beings must right themselves; the world never hears the voice of the oppressed."

"All this fine talk signifies nothing," observed Mr. Rathline. "Let us come to the point. What do you mean to do with Alfred's money?"

"I shall keep it for the boy who bears his name."

"And if he is dead, or can never be found?" reiterated Mr. Rathline.

"I do not believe in either of these suppositions; but in case of the first, I shall leave the money to Alice," replied Madeline.

"And meanwhile, what do you mean to give me?"

"Nothing," she said, "until the child is found; then I will continue to supply your extravagance as I have done."

This prospect by no means pleased Mr. Rathline; he wanted money at once, and the hope of finding the boy appeared to him very doubtful.

"I am not going to be bullied," he said,

sulkily. "If you don't give me money, I know another woman who will."

"Do you mean Alice?" she asked.

"No, I mean Lady Crehylls. I expect she will be glad to give me a good sum for this little history," remarked Mr. Rathline, with a triumphant leer.

Madeline's face grew marble white, but she answered steadily, "Lady Crehylls would not believe you. And all the power and influence of the present Lord Crehylls would be set against you."

"You are mistaken," said Mr. Rathline. "He is a poor weak fool: he would give up the title and estates directly, if he knew his nephew was alive."

"The title and estates are justly his," replied Madeline; "the son of a felon cannot inherit them. And if you go to Lady Crehylls, and she listens to you, I will divulge her husband's crime to all the world. Every one shall know that he was the man who slew Mathew Carbis."

"That is of no consequence to me, so that I get her ladyship to pay me well," said Mr. Rathline, trying to assume his old swagger. But something in Madeline's words had shaken him, and his impudence took an uneasy air. "Look here," he resumed, "I don't want to quarrel—that would be foolish in you and me. I'll give you till to-morrow to think over my proposition."

“And what is your proposition?”

“Why, that you should give me a good round sum down, and have done with me,” replied Mr. Rathline.

“I cannot,” returned Madeline. “I have only my professional income.”

“You have all Alfred’s fortune,” he persisted. “It was yours, as you know, from the day Tom was drowned; and considering all things, I think half of it is my fair right.”

“Not a penny of it is your right,” said Madeline. “It is useless to argue with me on this point. I hold the money in trust for the boy to whom I have given Alfred Singleton’s name; and I will double it for him if I can.”

“Your honesty is of the queerest kind I ever met with,” observed Mr. Rathline, in an indignant tone. “You think nothing of stealing a man’s child, but you won’t touch money which is positively your own.”

“Not mine, while the boy lives who personates your son,” replied Madeline. “And how do you know I think nothing of what I have done? I tell you I think till I am mad. I have wrecked my life for the sake of justice. But for the constant thoughts of my father’s death, and my mother’s sorrows, my days and nights would be one long agony of repentance.”

She ceased with quivering lips, and covered her face with both her small trembling hands.

“Well, I must say I shouldn’t like to have your conscience,” observed the easy Mr. Rathline, with great self-content. “It must be plaguy annoying to have anything on one’s mind. I have just seen a fellow who——” But here he checked himself, and turned suddenly to another subject. “It was a great loss to me,” he said, “when Alfred got drowned; because, naturally and dutifully, when he grew up, he would take care of his father; and, of course, I should have expected, too, this other lad to do his duty by me, and no doubt he would. But now the young fellow has run away, and got lost or killed, there is nothing to expect, except what I have to hope for from you. Come now, you are a just woman. So I say again, halves, or else I split on the whole affair.”

Madeline looked at the selfish, easy, callous man in a bewildered way. Blinded all her life long by her own bitterness and morbid sense of injustice, she did not yet see how this villain had taken advantage of her vindictive moodiness to accomplish a fraud, by which he gained in the present, and looked for greater gains in the future. To have a son who possessed a large fortune was to be rich himself one day, and to have a hold on Madeline was to have a hand always in her purse. Now, however, that the suppositious Alfred Singleton was lost, he began to be frightened, and he was secretly resolved to

wring money from Madeline and depart for America, while he was yet safe. He had confessed to Whalley that the boy was not his, but he had not given him a true version of the child's history. He had only said enough to whet the schoolmaster's avarice and curiosity, so as to insure his further search being an earnest one, while at the same time, he had impressed on his old friend the necessity of its being as private as possible. Advertisements and rewards in the case of such a run-away would never do. But though he had done all this, Mr. Rathline's faith in the boy's recovery was very small, and so of course now was his corresponding faith in the future enjoyment of his supposed son's property. And when he reflected who Mr. Whalley was, he began to think he should, on the whole, be safer on the other side of the sea. Out of old habit, he had given him part of his confidence, but he was much inclined to repent of this now. Thus, self-interest doubly urged him to escape, but to escape without money was impossible; so he came to Madeline, bent on gaining as much as possible from her fears. To his obtuse mind, it seemed a kind of unfairness that she should refuse him the half of his son's fortune, and her obstinacy on this point irritated him.

"I shall split on you," he repeated, brutally, "unless you listen to reason. What! isn't a man to take care of himself in this world?"

"Lady Crehylls will not listen to you," said Madeline, desperately.

"Well, I shall try her ; and if she wont, Mr. Pellew will," observed Mr. Rathline, in his coolest voice.

This blow struck home. Faint with the flood of anguish that rolled in upon her heart, Madeline clutched the bully by the arm to save herself from falling.

"Give me till to-morrow evening, as you proposed," she said, feebly, "and then come to me for an answer."

"Of what use to come to your place," he asked, "when you know that Alice will listen to all we say, even if she screws herself through the keyhole to do it?"

"Come all the same," said Madeline, drearily. "I will simply say yes or no. Alice will understand nothing from that. Here is something to last you till then."

She slipped some money into the cowardly, dastardly hand that had never worked for itself, and then got into the coach awaiting her, and drove away.

* * * * *

The next evening, when Mr. Rathline presented himself in Madeline's drawing-room, he found Alice seated there alone. Her eyes were red with weeping. Now, if Mr. Rathline pos-

sessed one human weakness, it was a slight partiality for his daughter, so he looked at her with some concern.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"The matter is," returned Alice, snappishly, "that I won't stand it any longer. You are worse than the brutes, father; even the lowest creatures care for their offspring."

"And don't I care for you?" asked Mr. Rathline, sentimentally.

"I am not speaking of myself," said Alice, with a gush of genuine tears, "but of poor little Alfred. You have kept him and yourself out of my sight for nearly three years; and now, when at last you come to pay me a visit, you think, I suppose, I shall be glad to see you. But you are mistaken; I never wish to see your face unless you bring Alfred with you."

Mr. Rathline gulped down an uncomfortable feeling which rose in his throat, and said, hurriedly, "But suppose I can't bring Alfred with me? Are you so very fond of the boy, Alice?"

"You know very well that he is all I have in the world now Tom is gone," replied the girl, passionately; "and yesterday Madeline confessed to me that he had run away from school. I have been crying ever since I heard it. Who can tell where he is, or what he is suffering now this minute? I hate this comfortable room and

all these grand things around me. And last night, thinking Alfred might be lying under some cold hedge, I never slept a moment, nor even went to bed."

Mr. Rathline tried to take the girl's hand from her sobbing face, but she snatched it away.

"I want no humbug from you, father," she said, angrily. "You and Madeline have conspired together to keep my brother from me, but I mean to bear it no longer. I'll see the child the moment he is found, or I'll know the reason why."

Again that uncomfortable sensation in the throat seemed to vex Mr. Rathline, as he said, hoarsely, "I wish you could see him, Alice. Where is Madeline? I want to speak to her."

"Where is Madeline?" repeated Alice, with great indignation; "she has done what you ought to have done. She is gone to search for Alfred. She went to Cornwall by last night's mail."

Mr. Rathline started up with a sudden oath upon his lips, but stifled it, and sat down again to stare blankly at his daughter.

"Madeline is gone to Lady Crehylls," he said to himself. "She has frustrated me there; but I've got another card to play, and I'll hold it back no longer. When Richard Rathline is himself in danger, old friendships must fall."

"Alice," he said, in a strange voice, "can you give me Mr. Pellew's address?"

"There it is on his card on the table," replied Alice.

Mr. Rathline took it up, and stooped over his weeping daughter.

"You and I may not meet again for a long while to come, Alice," he said. "Would you mind giving me a kiss?"

With tear-stained eyes Alice looked at him in great astonishment, and taking advantage of her surprise, he touched her cheek with his lips, and wrung her hand with a sudden grip.

"Think of me sometimes, little girl, when I am gone," said he.

Before Alice could collect herself to ask the cause of this unwonted affection, his step was on the stairs, and in another moment the front door closed heavily.

"I am not such a bad fellow, after all," said Mr. Rathline to himself as he went swaggering down the street, thinking complacently of this momentary softening of his heart.

CHAPTER VI.



UPON a gentle slope, midway between the hills and the sea, stood the old house of Penkivel. Round about and above it grew a thick wood of pines, storm-beaten and rugged, yet living on greenly, sheltering the mansion with their dark foliage, and throwing their shadows far over the purple heath. Lower down, to the right of the house, lay a dell so narrow, that it seemed a chasm rent in the earth; and here beech-trees and mountain ash clung to the soil, while on the southern side sloped the gardens of Penkivel, catching the sunshine, and screened from the sea by woods of larch and fir. At the bottom of the valley rolled a torrent, which foamed over rocks and boulders in a constant rush and roar, varying little in strength or sound in summer or winter.

The ancient rooms at Penkivel faced the garden, and caught the sun, and Lady Crehylls, in her loneliness, shut up the stately saloons which looked on the northern sea, and inhabited this more cheerful side, around whose windows

flowers clustered, and whence she could see the village and the church of Penkivel, standing down in the dell near the foaming river. Behind the mansion, piled up in bleak confusion, rose huge granite hills, unshadowed by a single tree, yet glorious all throughout the year with the golden and purple hues of heath and gorse. This last lay upon the hills like the golden mantles of a thousand kings, outspread and glistening in the sun. And above the glitter and sheen of their glory hung the deep blue of the unspotted sky—a sky, whose pure and tranquil azure gives relief to the resplendent beauty of these fields of gold. No words can paint the depth and clearness of that sapphire sea, which in majestic strength rolls in upon the northern shore, blending in the dim horizon with the western sky. Far less can words depict the sombre, awful beauty of the sea, and the cloud-capt heights above, when lightning and storm flash across them, driving huge shadows from hill to hill, and flinging the waves in thunder on the beach. At such times the mists take wreathed shapes, and the storm is palpable to the eye, striding like a giant from peak to peak, scattering rain and hailstones, lightning and pealed thunder in his path, while on the rocks below the troubled sea hurls mighty waves, which, with sullen roar, and foam tossed high in air, break in fury against the solid cliff.

One autumn day, in such a scene as this, Lady Crehylls sat at her window, watching the tempest, seeing the great cloud-shadows change the hills from purple into black, while her ear caught, unconsciously, the old dim monotonous sound of the sea, as the league-long rollers broke in lengthening roar upon the rocks. The storm brought no terrors with it to her. The roughness of the northern coast was dear to her heart. She loved Penkivel; here she was born, here she had spent her childhood, and here, when she returned in sorrow, she had seen her youth wither, and heard the tidings which told her she was childless and a widow. From this ancient roof she had gone forth a bride, to come back a forsaken wife, and to look down in unutterable grief upon the face of the lost lover and husband, who returned to her in death. So for her very sorrow's sake the place was dear; and as she trod the rooms haunted by a thousand memories, her whole life seemed to stand here around her unbroken by the gaps and changes, which assail the wanderer. Perhaps this was why she never left Penkivel, and why she could not endure the sight of Crehylls, where she had been happy, and where the blow had fallen which crushed all joy from out her life.

She sat on this dark day by the window till night fell abruptly, and the moaning wind among the pine-trees seemed like the wail of a

mighty sorrow unutterable by human voice. Carried by the mournful sound into depths of thought past speech, she leaned her face upon her hands, while within her soul there stirred a whisper of God's peace in the storm—the “still, small voice,” which speaketh after the whirlwind and the thunder, when the tempest of earthly sorrow is past, and the breaking of the eternal day shines on the softened spirit. Then, as the terrible wail of the wind swept again through the pine tops, she let her hands drop, and looked out hopefully into the darkness. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” The words grew upon her out of the blankness; she did not utter them, they were in and around her, as the rainbow is in the stormy sky; and bowing her head in hope, she wept quietly.

In the noise of the storm, she had not heard the door open; and in the sudden glare of the light, which the servant brought, she could not discern the face of the visitor, so unexpectedly announced. But as the door closed, the tall, dark figure came forward, and stood before her silently. Then she started up, and recoiling in anguish before all the memories which this too beautiful face brought to her heart, she spread out her hand to save herself, and leant trembling against a pillar, on which rested the bust of her father.

“Madeline!” she cried.

Madeline gazed at her steadily, with eyes deepening with a strange fire.

“Do you appeal to your father for protection?” she asked. “Can you dream how the sight of that marble face, steels my heart unpitifully against all of his name and race?”

“Why are you here?” returned Lady Crehylls. “Your presence insults me.”

“My presence has always insulted the world,” said Madeline, in a voice of bitter sorrow; “and, most fitting of all, most just of human, selfish justice, is the fact that it insults you, the wife of Lord Crehylls, and the daughter of Mr. Lanyon.”

Lady Crehylls gazed at her in wonder, her pale, gentle face gathering a look of pity; but she uttered not a word.

“Look at him,” continued Madeline, stretching out her hand towards the marble figure. “He lived and died respected, did he not? An honourable man, whose dying face was wetted by his child’s tears; whose corpse was covered with trappings of luxurious woe; whose tomb—a marble lie—stands among the better dead to this day. Speak! Is it so?”

“Madeline, are you mad?” asked Lady Crehylls, hurriedly. “All the world knows my father was good, and honoured. Why are you come here merely to rave?”

“Hear me, oh Heaven,” said Madeline, lifting her arms on high, “and give me strength to bear with her while I speak the truth. I am not come here to utter ravings, but to tell those terrible facts, which have loaded my soul with silent ignominy and pain. Sit down, Lady Crehylls; you will scarce have strength to stand while I speak, for I have strange things to say.”

Madeline, as she finished, had relapsed into her old impassive calm; but Lady Crehylls, trembling in every limb, sank into a chair, and gazed at her enemy with wild eyes.

“But first,” continued Madeline, in a quiet voice, “I ask you, if you remember having seen a certain Mr. Rathline some two, or three years ago?”

“I remember him,” answered Lady Crehylls. “He was a slanderer—a bad man.”

“He may be both, and yet what he told you is no slander,” returned Madeline. “I sent him to you. I wished you to know something of the truth. I thought it would soften your grief for your child.”

“Soften my grief to have it hinted to me that his father was an assassin!” exclaimed Lady Crehylls, angrily. “Miss Sylvester, I will hear no more of this. I do not desire to have an interview with you.”

“My name was never Sylvester. That was a false name given me by your father.”

“Who and what are you?” said Lady Crehylls, trembling excessively as she spoke.

“I am Walter Sherborne’s daughter,” replied Madeline, as she rose pale and mournful before her, “and for your sake your father hunted mine to death; then he hedged me round with falsehoods; he bowed down my head with dishonour and shame, and heaped upon my child-heart all the agony of a great crime.”

“But your father was guilty,” cried Lady Crehylls, with pale lips. “The concealment of your name was a kindness.”

“Do not deceive yourself,” said the calm voice of Madeline. “Mr. Lanyon’s motive was like his deed, vile and cruel. He knew the guilty man, and, knowing him, he deliberately fixed his crime upon my father, and deliberately he let him die. Then, still to screen the true criminal, he took me into his care, and laid upon my young soul all the burden and anguish of this man’s sin. For twelve years—for so long did his cruelty last—I bore this load, and strove to bear it patiently, knowing that a father’s sin must fall upon his child; and through all these twelve years—through all their slow, lagging, weary days, which crawled by like wounded snakes, he never once relented. Agatha Crehylls, can you guess why your father had no pity to give to Madeline Sherborne?”

"No, no," cried Lady Crehylls, shrinking from her. "I can guess nothing. I do not believe your words."

"You are speaking untruly," said Madeline, in the same quiet way; "in every vein you feel that I am uttering the truth. You do not need words now to tell you that the man, who slew Mathew Carbis—the man for whom my father died—was Geoffrey, Lord Crehylls. For nearly three years you have brooded over Richard Rathline's words, doubting, fearing they might be true. I gave you this time of suspense; I give you also the confirmation of your fears."

"The man Rathline never mentioned Mathew Carbis," said Lady Crehylls, lifting her white face from her hands, with a momentary gleam of hope.

"Perhaps not," returned Madeline, in the same unmoved way; "but he told you Lord Crehylls had quitted his home to expiate a crime."

Lady Crehylls was silent, but Madeline saw her shudder from head to foot.

"Have you suffered in these few last years?" she said, with a smile of contemptuous pity playing on her lips. "You need not answer. I can read the lines upon your face; but your sufferings do not equal mine. And remember this always, I suffered unjustly. Your father, deliberately, for twelve years, bowed me down

beneath a yoke of agony, only to spare you, his idol, a solitary pang. Never forget that it was for you I suffered ; for you I was taught to lie ; for you I lived in loneliness, quivering at the thought of love and friendship. Never forget that while this blight and pain passed over me, you had twelve years' honour, twelve years' love, twelve years' peace and happiness. Now, do you understand at last the cost at which these were purchased for you ? Can you feel what these twelve years did for me ? ”

At this question, like one fascinated by some strange horror, Lady Crehylls fixed her eyes on Madeline's white face in speechless pain.

“ They blighted me,” said Madeline, answering her look ; “ they crushed within my soul all faith ; they made the universe dark to me ; for God's providence they gave me man's injustice, which has cast me down beneath the wheels of Jugger-naut ; and my life now lies maimed and broken.”

She ceased abruptly, and into the momentary silence which ensued, there broke the wild wail of the wind, and the rush of the sea on the shore.

“ I too have suffered,” said Lady Crehylls, softly ; “ but shall I lose my faith because of sorrow ? Shall I bless God only in prosperity ? and in grief shall I ‘ curse God, and die ? ’ Must we not believe that a pitying Father

directs the storm and the whirlwind, as well as the sunshine and the shower?"

"You are a poor comforter," said Madeline, bitterly. "If the hand of Providence had directed the ills I have suffered, I would not have rebelled; or if I had suffered for my own sin, I would not have lifted my voice in a murmur; but I have been struck by the selfish injustice of man. I have been made to weep that you might laugh; I have been kept lonely that you might have friends; I have had love and hope wrenched from my heart, that they might crown you with happiness; I have been thrust out into the wilderness to hunger and thirst, that your soul might be satisfied with good things."

The inexpressible bitterness and pathos of her voice rang through the heart of Agatha Crehylls. She rose quickly, and throwing herself down by Madeline's side, she suddenly flung her arms around her.

"Madeline," she said, "I would suffer much with a willing heart to make you happy. Do not envy me the few short years of peace my father bought at such a cost."

Until these words, Madeline endured her touch and her speech; but now she burst from her, flinging off her clinging hands, as though they tortured her like a fire.

"You have hardened me," she said, disdainfully. "How dare you remind me that Mr.

Lanyon bought your husband for you with my father's life? How dare you tell me you had peace when there was no peace? Can you boast to me that the love of a feeble, fickle man, a man whose hand was stained with blood, made you happy? And can you think I envy you such happiness?"

"I cannot, I will not believe in Geoffrey's guilt!" cried his widow, passionately. "You have given me no proof."

"The proof is, that he exiled himself at my command," said Madeline, in her old calm way; "and he died an exile, never seeking to see your face again. It was a merciful sentence, uttered in the rashness and romance of youth; and I grieve for it now. If you require further proofs, they are here. I do not see why I need spare you longer."

She took a packet from her bosom, and, unfastening it with a steady hand, she laid before Lady Crehylls the letters of her husband to the beautiful wife of Walter Sherborne, and the letter written by that unhappy man to Madeline herself. As her eyes fell upon the first, Lady Crehylls, with a sinking heart, recognised the writing and the words she had glanced at in her father's desk. She read the letters through—all the foolish, passionate outpouring of a boy's love—her lip trembling, her cheek blanching as she read; then, with her last hold upon hope

breaking like a thread, she took into her shaking hand Walter Sherborne's mournful letter, and read it word by word. The rustle of the paper, as she laid it down, sounded through the room with ghastly distinctness ; and even the flutter of the lace upon her quivering arm, smote Madeline's ear painfully.

"Are you satisfied?" she said, in a calm, cold voice.

For answer, Agatha Crehylls gazed into her face with a look of unutterable despair—a look which Madeline gathered in greedily, as though she gained from it re-assurance for herself.

"If you still feel a doubt," she continued, "send for Michael Polgrain, and question him. He saw the blow struck."

Lady Crehylls repeated her words like one in a dream ; then, in a dreary voice, she said, quietly, "I will not question him ; there is no need. These proofs are past doubt."

"Past doubt!" echoed Madeline. "You are right, they are past doubt."

A deep sigh escaped her lips as she spoke, a sigh of relief, with which she dismissed the fear Maurice had planted in her heart.

"It is not these only which convince me," continued Lady Crehylls, glancing at the letters with a shudder, "but all the words Geoffrey himself said in leaving me ; his confession of your power ; his desperation and fear ; his mournful

farewell—all return to me now as testimony of his guilt. Why should I utter his name to his accomplice, Michael Polgrain, and hear details that would kill me?”

She hid her face in her hands as though to hold down the sobs, which rose dry and gaspingly in her throat.

“Are you afraid to hear all the truth?” asked Madeline, disdainfully,—“you, who have not been afraid to do such cruel injustice, and utter such cruel untruths of others?”

“I!” exclaimed Lady Crehylls. “What injustice have I done?”

“Have you forgotten it so easily?” said Madeline, with mournful scorn. “I have shown you your husband’s letters, let me ask you now to read one of your own.”

Before the pale face, and the frightened eyes which looked at her so imploringly, Madeline laid down the letter that had separated her from Maurice Pellew. Lady Crehylls recognised it with a quick and burning blush.

“I tried to repair this wrong,” she cried, tremblingly. “Believe me, Madeline; I did, indeed.”

Madeline’s lip curled contemptuously as she said, “Can a wrong ever be repaired? Can you call back in its flight the barbed arrow your hand has flung? Give me back my life, then you may atone for the evil done me by you and yours.

Give me back my innocence, my honour, and my truth, and then talk to me of reparation ; but do not mock me with the word now."

"If these foolish, rash words, written by me in my first agony, did indeed injure you," said Lady Crehylls, "I am deeply, deeply grieved——"

"Injure me !" interrupted Madeline, for the first time letting tears start to her eyes ; "they parted me from the only love I ever felt, they wrenched from my soul a thousand good and gentle things, hiding there till then, in spite of all my gloom ; and they made me do a cruel wrong to the kindest, noblest heart——"

But she stopped abruptly. Her agony of remorse at every thought of that generous love always choked her words, when she strove to speak of Tom Singleton. Lady Crehylls clasped her hands together nervously in grief and contrition.

"I am full of sorrow," she said, "to think that I injured you ; you, who had suffered so much through my father and my husband. Would I have added to your burden, do you think, if I had known the truth ?"

"I spared you the truth," answered Madeline, drearily. "I bore your insults patiently, and I quitted your house in silence, when, by a single word, I might have overwhelmed the names of Lanyon and Crehylls with disgrace and ruin."

"But you banished all joy, all life and light from my house," interposed Lady Crehylls, rallying her courage. "You accuse me of having influenced your life for evil; but have you not influenced mine? Have I suffered nothing through you, Madeline? Remember that I have lost husband, father, and child."

Madeline gazed at her with a look of angry wonder.

"But it was just—just that you should suffer," she cried, almost with a shriek. "If I had done more than justice I should go mad. Knowing, as you do, your father's selfish cruelty, and your husband's sin, I wonder you dare bring a counter-accusation against me. Do not call me Madeline; you make me shudder."

She turned away and paced the room hurriedly, as though her mind were full of troubled thought. Then suddenly she stopped before the weeping Lady Crehylls.

"Do you mean to tell me," she said, in her low, quiet voice, "that you would rather I had hanged your husband than banished him? You force me to ask this coarse, hard question. Speak! Would you have preferred a public trial and public shame, or was the justice I did the best and the most merciful?"

"It was the best," answered Lady Crehylls, sobbingly. "I wish I could feel thankful to you, but I cannot."

"What do your thanks matter?" said Madeline, scornfully. "I wish only for your acknowledgment that I was just. It is enough that Mr. Lanyon understood that I was merciful; and he did, or he would not have destroyed my letter, before the stroke fell that took away memory and strength."

She seemed to gather comfort from this thought, and the momentary doubt of her own justice passed away.

"Remember this," she said, suddenly; "I never meant to hurt your father."

"Nor my child," said Lady Crehylls, softly. "I know it was not your fault that Geoffrey took the boy with him."

There was an instant's hesitation, a crimson flush flashing over the proud face, and then Madeline spoke.

"It was not my fault," she said, "but I am glad he took him. He could not justly inherit the title and the estates of the Crehylls. He is a felon's child!"

Startled, and pale as ashes, Lady Crehylls looked in her face sorrowfully.

"Do you mean, Madeline, if my boy were living, he could not be Lord Crehylls?" she said.

"I mean that," answered Madeline, sharply. "I mean I would not stand by silently, and see your son take a title and estate justly forfeited

for his father's crime. I meant mercy when I banished Lord Crehylls, and not robbery."

"Robbery!" repeated Agatha.

"Yes," replied Madeline; "but I will not, through the mistake of my romantic youth, allow the present Lord Crehylls to be despoiled. It is on this business I am come to you. I do not meet you face to face willingly," she continued, in a mournful voice. "It is a bitter task for me to speak smoothly to the woman, for whom all my life has been warped and darkened. Nothing but that sense of justice, which is the strongest feeling of my soul, would have brought me to Penkivel."

She paused a moment, and Lady Crehylls met her glance with a patient, worn look.

"Have you some new sorrow to tell me?" she asked, in a sad voice.

Madeline put her hand across her brow, and swept back hastily the heavy braids of hair which had fallen over it. She was struggling with her last weakness. A strange desire had assailed her to weep for pity, and to cry out to her enemy that she had brought her joy, and not sorrow, and that pardon was a holier thing than justice; but as she wavered, her listless hand fell upon her bosom and touched the miniature of her mother, which she wore there; and with this touch came a quick revulsion of feeling. Where was this unhappy mother? How

had she lived, how died, when Lord Crehylls deserted her? She was mad, to have pity for the son and widow of such a man! Let the inexorable consequences of his sin follow them. A terrible, a hard injustice had meted out to her her own fate; but to them she would only give justice—no more. With this determination growing hard upon her brow, she drew near to Agatha Crehylls, and laid the picture before her.

“This is the face of my mother,” she said, coldly. “I am ashamed, when I forget that Lord Crehylls drew this weak, foolish woman from her home, and then forsook her; but I scorn myself when for a moment I cease to remember, that having betrayed my father, he left him to die for the crime he had himself committed. Can you be sorry that the child of such a man is dead?”

Lady Crehylls was looking at the portrait with eyes tear-blinded, and at this abrupt question her anguish broke forth in a low cry of pain.

“My poor little Aubrey!” she said. “It is well for him that he is spared all this sorrow.”

“Yes, it is well,” said Madeline; “for if he lived, I would publish all this history, if you dared to claim for him the name, and the lands of the Crehylls. It is to say this that I am come to you; and I warn you, that the man called Rathline, whom you saw in the church-

yard of Penkivel, will visit you, and endeavour to extort money from you, on the plea that your child is living. You have wronged me wittingly, and unwittingly, all my life long, but I will not aid a villain to make you his dupe. If you wish for one moment's peace again throughout your life, do not believe this man when he tells you the boy lives."

"But he was drowned — my child was drowned," said Lady Crehylls, looking at her with wild eyes. "What do your words mean? Is there any doubt of the fact?"

"You would be mad to doubt it," answered Madeline. "You will fill your days with anguish if you listen to Richard Rathline. Remember, I have warned you."

She moved slowly towards the door; but Lady Crehylls sprang forward and clutched her dress.

"Be merciful!" she cried in agony. "If there is a doubt of my child's death, tell me."

Madeline stood still the instant she felt the detaining touch of Agatha's small hand, and with her cold face turned full on her, she said, "What shall I tell you? Shall I give you a false hope? Shall I say you will see your child again, when I know you never, never will?"

"Are you sure?—are you quite, quite sure?" cried the unhappy mother, with her fevered grasp on Madeline's robe still unrelaxed.

"I am quite sure," was the answer, spoken firmly in hard tones.

Then the hands fell, and sinking into a chair, Lady Crehylls wept bitterly. The sight of her tears brought a scornful look to Madeline's proud face.

"Ah, weep on," she said, "weep as though you were the only woman in the world, to whom the sins of others have brought sorrow. Weep as though you were the sole widow on the earth standing alone, bereaved, childless, and grief-stricken. Have you no eyes to see what I am? Did I lose nothing when your child sank into the sea? I tell you I lost then my last hold upon goodness, and truth, and honour. I am a wicked and a desperate woman now, unworthy of a good man's love."

This thought of Maurice brought the old drear look into her eyes, and she went on more bitterly.

"The name of Crehylls is fatal to me. The man who died, trying to save your son, was worth a hundred such men as that boy would make. I have not reproached you with that loss. I have not reminded you that my husband died for your child."

Once more she moved away, and then Lady Crehylls, in a broken voice, cried feebly, "For his sake I can bear your presence here, if you will stay. He was a good, a noble man. Will you go away on such a night as this?"

“ Agatha Crehylls, if the night were the worst that the world ever saw, I would not accept hospitality at Penkivel.”

With these words, Madeline’s tall figure passed out of her sight, and in another instant Lady Crehylls heard the sweep of wheels mingling with the wild rush of the wind and waves.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SECOND NARRATIVE OF ALICE RATHLINE.

IT has come to my turn again to tell some short portion of this story.

Late on the day, following the evening, on which father wished me good-bye, Mr. Pellew called and requested urgently to see me. When I entered the room, he came forward in a hurried way, and grasped my hand. I saw he was very pale. "Where is Madeline?" he cried.

I told him she was gone to Cornwall.

"And do you know the Duke de Briancourt has followed her?" he asked.

"No," I answered. "I know nothing of that; but I am aware that he had an interview with her just before her departure."

"Alice," said Mr. Pellew, "you must go with me into Cornwall to find your sister. We must save her from this man and from herself. I have things to tell her which will alter all her life."

He was agitated by some great excitement—I

saw that ; but he was very calm and earnest, and I dared not ask him a question, fearing too justly that father might have somewhat to do with his present mood. Seeing him so earnest, I made no objection to the journey.

“Tell me only one thing,” I said ; “is there any hope of my seeing my brother Alfred where we are going?”

“I trust so,” he answered, gravely. “The chaise will be at the door in an hour, Alice ; let me find you ready.”

With this he was gone. I stood staring after him a moment, and then sat down to think and to wonder what it all meant. But I found it was of no use asking questions of myself, for the simple reason that I could not answer them ; so I gave up the thinking business, and packed my small trunk instead. I am not a girl to make much fuss over myself ; for which reason, packing and dressing did not take me very long. I was bursting with curiosity when I stepped into the chaise ; but one glance at Mr. Pellew’s face told me it would be unwise to ask questions.

As we rattled through London, I saw great bills and posters up, with the “Sudden illness of Madame Silvia,” announced in letters a yard long.

“What a lying world this is !” I said, angrily.

Mr. Pellew stared at me in a strange way for

a moment, and then drew from beneath the seat an old knapsack, of that sort which hawkers sometimes carry. On a little brass plate in front he showed me engraved the words "Nathaniel Strangways, Licensed Hawker."

"Have you ever seen this pedlar's box before, Alice?" he asked me.

"Yes," I replied, "I remember it well enough. I have played with it often when a child."

At this he shuddered, and dropped it from his hand suddenly.

"I recollect your buying it of mother," I continued, "on the first day I ever saw you, when the little ones were using it for a table, father having, with his usual generosity, sold up every stick we had."

"Then it was never out of your possession, Alice, from the time your father brought it home till the hour I bought it?"

"No, never," I answered. "I can swear to that."

"I am glad to hear you say so," returned Mr. Pellew. And with this he put the box beneath the seat again.

"And what are you going to do with it now?" I asked.

"I am going to take it to its owner, Alice," he said. "I am going to lay it before the eyes of one to whom the name of Nathaniel Strang-

ways will shriek of murder. Ah, and the foulest murder, too, ever done, since for years it was laid upon the conscience of an innocent man; and for more years still it has blighted a life, which but for this might have been noble."

I felt he was speaking of Madeline; but I would not name her just then, for my veins were growing chilly with a terrible fear.

"Who is the man?" I asked, in a quivering voice.

"Mr. Whalley, your brother Alfred's school-master," answered Mr. Pellew.

I heaved a great sigh of relief, and my tears fell fast down my white cheeks.

"My father?" I said, gaspingly.

Mr. Pellew gazed at me with much pity and tenderness.

"Do not be afraid, Alice," he said, softly—"your father is safe. He had nothing to do with this man's crime. His guilt consists in not divulging it—a guilt so terrible in its consequences, that it is only for Madeline's and your sake, that I have wrung a promise of safety for him from the authorities."

We went on for many a weary mile after this in silence. At length I dropped asleep, and waking up in the middle of the night with a loud cry, I grasped Mr. Pellew by the hand, and entreated him to tell me whether he believed this Mr. Whalley, or Nathaniel Strangways, if

that was his real name, had killed my brother Alfred, and then raised the report that he had run away.

"I do not think so," returned Mr. Pellew, looking at me in the same pitying way; "yet I would not have you be too hopeful of ever seeing your brother again. He may be dead, although not through Mr. Whalley."

For a moment my heart sank at these terrible words, then I grew hopeful again.

"Alfred is a hardy boy," I said; "and, wander where he will, I am sure he will find friends."

"Heaven grant that some kind hand has succoured the poor little fugitive, who escaped from this villain," answered Mr. Pellew.

The tone of his voice brought back my old fear, and I began to weep silently, thinking he surely knew that little Alfred was dead.

"Try to sleep again, Alice," said Mr. Pellew; "the journey is long, and if sorrow awaits you at the end, rest will help you to bear it."

This was all the comfort he had to give me.

Through that night, as we journeyed on, I saw the lamps of another chaise, which sometimes followed ours, and sometimes passed us. In the morning this chaise was still our shadow, and, in fact, it never left us till we reached Exeter; then we lost it suddenly, and Mr. Pellew and I went on alone to a little village,

some miles to the north of the old city, and not far from the sea, near which stood the house of Mr. Whalley. Leaning from the chaise window, I saw a cold stone building, somewhat higher than country dwellings generally are. It was very white and clean looking,—not a speck upon it anywhere,—not a weed in the prim garden,—not a spot on the brightly shining windows. A stout woman, with strong arms, and strangely watchful eyes, opened the gate to our ring. “Mr. Whalley is not at home,” she said.

“I am sorry,” returned Mr. Pellew, “to hear this. I wish to bring him two new pupils.”

Then, still with that watchful look upon her, she unlocked the gate, and invited us to enter.

“I think master will be at home in the evening,” she said; “meanwhile, perhaps, you would like to speak to one of the ushers. He can tell you the terms, and show you the schoolroom.”

Evidently she had received strict orders not to miss a pupil.

There is no need to relate all the talk that followed, nor how well we played our parts; enough that two hours went by, and Mr. Whalley did not return. Then I saw the woman grow uneasy at our lingering stay, and at last she broadly hinted that we had better come again to-morrow.

Upon this Mr. Pellew asked if we might not see the garden. She could not refuse us this

small favour : but she did it sourly, saying there was not much to see in a few fruit trees, and a potato ground. Her words were true—the garden was an ugly patch of land ; and I wondered why Mr. Pellew walked all through it, while the woman, standing at the gate, watched us. There were no trees to hide us from her view, wherever we might stand. Perhaps this is why she did not follow us, but she could not hear our words.

“ Alice,” said Mr. Pellew, when we had reached the walk farthest from her, “ have you courage to stay here to-night ? Don’t look startled,—she can see your face. I did not expect to find the villain from home. This baffles me. Some one, whom she does not suspect, ought to stay here to watch for his return. We have reason to think there are signals preconcerted between this woman and him, by means of which, he would save himself if he saw cause to fear us. Even Nero, you know, had a slave devoted to him.”

Here in our walk we approached near the watchful woman, leaning on the gate, and Mr. Pellew instantly changed his tone.

“ These apples,” he said, “ are of a peculiar sort which only grow in Devonshire and Cornwall. May I pluck one for the young lady ?”

“ Certainly,” she answered, forcing her lips to speak civilly.

Then we passed her, and went down the other side of the garden, traversing a walk by a sheltered wall, where peaches grew : and against the wall was reared a little shed for tools—a sort of wood house, roofed with thatch.

“ Alice,” continued Mr. Pellew, very earnestly, “ have you courage to remain ? There is not so much danger in staying here as you may think. You see this shed ? Well, when night falls, help will be there, and you have but to call from a window to be heard. In the chaise that followed us were two Bow Street men ; they and I will hide here when it grows dark enough : and, if all goes well, we shall not need to take our prey till the morning ; but if you see signs of suspicion or of flight, draw your blind half-way up, and bring your candle for a moment to the window. Can you do it ? Will you stay ? ”

“ I will stay,” I answered. “ I do not forget this villain so cruelly treated my only brother that the child fled from him, and maybe he is lying dead now in some lone wood. I am not afraid. I will stay, if you can manage to gain the woman’s consent.”

“ You must feign illness,” returned Mr. Pellew, “ and I will manage the rest. You perceive the window of the spare room, in which you will sleep, is exactly opposite the shed. I remarked that when we went over the house.”

"She did not take us to the upper rooms," I observed, suspiciously.

"You are of a curious disposition, Alice," returned Mr. Pellew, smilingly. "I have heard that of you. Well, to-night you must use all your faculties, and make all the discoveries you can safely."

"I confess to a prying disposition," I answered; "and I won't deny that I have listened at doors a good deal lately. But then I have been aggravated by a secret, and one which too nearly concerns me, for me to stand upon ceremony about it. I know for certain, that for nearly three years past, some plot has been going on between Madeline and father concerning poor little Alfred. And the Duke de Briancourt is in it, too."

Mr. Pellew's face changed colour as I spoke, and his eyes sought the ground.

"You do not hate Madeline for this, I hope, Alice?" said he.

"Do you hate her, Mr. Pellew?" I asked, "or did my poor brother Tom hate her? It is not so easy to hate Madeline, though one may hate what she does. As for me, I am sorry to see her in father's clutches. Father's conscience is always at peace, let him do what he will; but Madeline's is a lake of fire, on which she tosses in agony."

"We must save her, Alice," said Mr. Pellew,

and his lips trembled. "You speak strongly, but with truth. We are standing still too long; let us walk on. Forgive me, Alice, if I pain you by saying it, but your father has duped Madeline for years. He has wrought a falsehood against her life and happiness, which will destroy her, unless your hand and mine can draw her back. Look upon your watch and risk this night, as a reparation of your father's wrong. He has sold Madeline to the Duke de Briancourt, Alice, and perhaps our utmost efforts may not rescue her from that madman's clutch."

Mr. Pellew spoke in a low voice, scarcely audible; but his agitation was so intense, that his face and lips were ashy pale. I understood at once the truth of his words: I remembered how often father and the duke were together at Naples, and how often I had heard of their being together in London. It must have been a strong motive on the duke's part, to make him endure the society of Mr. Rathline. I felt my heart beat fast, and the colour rush to my cheeks; and I inwardly resolved that father's wickedness should not be successful, if I could frustrate it.

"Being Mr. Rathline's daughter," I said, "I owe my help to all his victims, Madeline included. Tell me what you suspect."

"I suspect," said Mr. Pellew, "among other things, that your father told the duke of Madeline's journey, and whither she was gone; and he

put him in communication with this man Whalley, perhaps with the intention of deceiving her with a pretended discovery of the poor child, who has run away. You are a good searcher, Alice," concluded Mr. Pellew, "and a good listener. Seize every clue you can this night, and may all good angels give you courage!"

When we passed out of the garden gate, Mr. Pellew would have put money in the woman's hand, but she drew back quietly.

"Master never permits his servants to take money from visitors," she said.

At this moment I stumbled over some small obstruction in the path, and fell heavily to the ground. Mr. Pellew would have raised me, but I shrieked aloud with pain.

"I have sprained my ankle horribly," I cried. "I cannot endure to be touched."

Roused at last into showing some concern, the woman aided Mr. Pellew to carry me into the house, and lay me on a sofa. No sooner had they set me down than I fainted skilfully; but while the woman ran for water, I whispered to Mr. Pellew, who was quite scared, "Don't alarm yourself."

However, this real fright of his, as I had judged, did good, and he played his part all the better for it.

"I must return to Exeter," he said, looking at his watch. "Do you think you can bear to be moved now?"

"Oh, no! no! no!" I cried, in agony. "Let me stay here, or I shall die."

"That's impossible," said the woman, sharply. "In master's absence, I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of permitting a stranger to remain in the house."

"I don't think your master would object to Miss Rathline's staying here," returned Mr. Pellew. "On the contrary, I believe he will be much annoyed if you refuse her this slight hospitality."

"Miss Rathline!" exclaimed the housekeeper. "Is this young lady Mr. Rathline's daughter?"

"I am sorry to say I am," I answered, dolefully.

"If you are doubtful of the fact," continued Mr. Pellew, "perhaps you had better read this letter, which I have brought for Mr. Whalley from his old friend. Of course, I should have kept it for him till to-morrow, but for this accident."

The woman took the letter, and broke the seal unceremoniously.

"I am satisfied," she said, as she unfolded it. "I know Mr. Rathline's writing. If Miss Rathline is really too ill to be moved to-night, she is welcome to remain."

I glanced at Mr. Pellew from beneath my eyelids, and saw, by his troubled face, that he was repenting of his request, and was afraid now

to leave me here. It was impossible, of course, for me to reassure him.

"You had better let me carry you to the chaise," he said to me, imploringly.

But I steadfastly refused ; and the earnest way in which he insisted, and the reluctance, the downright pain, with which he at last quitted me, quite disarmed the housekeeper's fears.

"At all events, you will let me send out a doctor from Exeter to see Miss Rathline?" he said to her on leaving.

"I perceive no objection to that," she answered ; "but I hope he will come as soon as possible. I like to shut up the house early."

"He shall be here as quickly as I can send him," said Maurice.

With another look into my eyes, which answered him bravely, he was gone. But I confess my heart sank when I heard the sound of wheels, and knew I was alone in the ogre's castle. I could not count the herd of neglected boys, all young children, as anything, or the poor, sickly usher, who looked as starved and miserable as Romeo's apothecary.

I was carried upstairs into the spare room and laid upon the bed, and then I asked for a cup of strong tea, which I drank, eating at the same time as much bread and butter as I dared. "I need all my strength for the work I have to do," I said to myself.

After this all was silent till about nine o'clock, when the doctor came. It frightened me terribly to see him ushered into my room; but when he declared my foot was badly sprained I knew he was no doctor, and in a moment, when he sent the woman away for hot water, he leaned over me, whispering, "Mr. Pellew would insist on my coming. I am to stay with you, if you are afraid. I am one of the men who came down in the chaise from London."

"I am not afraid," I answered. "If you remain here as a doctor, the whole house will be watchful and alert, and nothing can be done. Say I am doing well, although unable to move, and then go."

"You are quite right, miss," said the man; "we must have him back in security, if possible. We shall never find him else. I have brought you some matches, and a tinder-box, and a wax candle."

I hid these effectually just before the woman returned, and the pretended surgeon then took his leave.

At ten o'clock came the locking of doors, then sleep and silence fell upon the house, except for the tread of one quiet step heard rarely. By this I understood the housekeeper was sitting up alone for her master, and I prepared to share her watch with all my faculties alert. I sat in darkness, having refused a rushlight, and the hours

crept by, slow, black, and silent, till the clock struck one. After this, my strained ears caught a footfall, and soon I heard distinctly a stealthy step mount the stairs. The step passed my room, where it paused a moment, and I heard the small sharp sound made by glass, or earthenware when shaken. The next instant came the soft unlocking of a door, then steps again, and silence.

“To whom can she be taking food at this time of night?” I asked myself, breathlessly.

With a very quiet hand I unclosed my door, and saw the glimmer of a light faintly shining down a steep, narrow stair, masked by a high door, standing ajar now, but which I remembered was shut in the evening, when the woman had said, it led to a lumber-room. As I watched, uncertain what to do, a change in the shadow warned me the woman had taken the candle in her hand, and I guessed she was going to descend the stairs. Quick as thought, I closed my door noiselessly, and kneeling down, I looked out through the large old-fashioned keyhole upon the woman’s face. It was ghastly white; it was more filled with terror than any face I ever saw; it seemed only a frightful shadow of the hard, watchful face, I had looked on but a few hours ago. The light she held fell full on her, revealing her terror even to the shaking of her lips. Slowly, softly she crept down the stairs, the light

stealing away from beneath my door as she went, till with a little flicker it vanished, and I drew a long, firm breath of relief.

What had brought that look of terror to her eyes? What was she gone to fetch? Was there time for me to traverse that steep stair, and fly back to my room before she returned?

I had noted the house well in going over it in the daytime. She had been proud to show it, proud of its cleanliness and well-kept order; and she had lingered long in the kitchen, that we might mark its brightness and liberal arrangements. Quick as lightning my thought followed her thither, and decided instantly that I had time to explore the so-called lumber-room, and return in safety. My prying disposition had naturally made me light of foot. I went up the steep stairs like a feather. At the top was a small landing, and another door, standing open. A dim light burnt within, and the faint rays of the moon shone down from a skylight, which was the only window.

While I live, I shall never forget the sight which met my eyes when, after a momentary bewilderment, I sprang forward within the room. In the furthest corner lay a woman, crouched upon some straw, and covered by a dark rug. Manacles were on her skeleton arms, and a chain about her waist confined her to a large iron ring in the wall. I had never seen a lunatic before,

but I guessed instantly this woman was one of a desperate sort, and I should have feared to approach her, but for her voice, which was very soft and low, as she murmured to herself indistinctly. It all passed so quickly, that I cannot put in words the swiftness with which I reached her. Then, with a faint sickness at my heart, I saw she was dying, and I understood the terror of Mr. Whalley's housekeeper.

I had heard of the cruel means by which the insane are coerced ; but the sight was so much more dreadful than the hearing, that I leant over the poor creature with tears of pity. Then her large eyes met mine suddenly, and there flashed into them a gleam of comfort.

"At last," she murmured, faintly, while the faint flicker of a smile broke upon her lips. She was too weak to say more, she was almost past speech. But I understood her. I thought she would have said, "At last I see the face of a friend—a face which is neither a gaoler's nor an enemy's."

"What can I do for you?" I said, softly. "I will obey your wish in anything."

But there was no time for answer, for at this instant I heard the housekeeper's step upon the stairs below. I glanced eagerly round the large, bare garret, and saw there was a hiding-place behind some old boxes. I was there in the space of a second. I was dressed in black, which

gave me a greater chance of escaping unseen, and in the excitement of my nerves I felt no fear.

The housekeeper entered, bringing wine with her, which she put to the poor prisoner's lips. Through the crevices between the boxes, I saw alarm and agitation still written on her face.

The wine revived the sick woman, and her voice grew stronger.

"I want to see your master," she said; "I think I am dying."

"No! no!" answered the woman, hurriedly; "don't say that. Master is away from home. Drink some more wine."

With a faint sight the poor lady obeyed her, and then once more she raised her voice. I felt and knew she meant her words for me.

"I take you to witness," she said, "that I have been kept in this prison many, many years (Heaven help me!—I know not how many!) and I have been chained as mad when I am not mad. Do you hear me?"

Oh, how I longed to give her some token that I heard! But I dared not.

"I hear you," said the housekeeper, soothingly. "Are you better?"

"Better, and nearly free!" she answered. "You promised just now you would do anything for me."

Her white, dying face was turned towards me,

and by the light of the lamp I saw the imploring look upon it. I ventured to raise my hand and wave it. I saw her smile, and my hand fell down in thankfulness on my heart. The housekeeper, kneeling by the bed, had her back towards my hiding-place, and, unstartled by the dying woman's look of joy, she never even turned her head.

"Did I promise you?" she said, as one speaks to a child. "Then I'll do it."

"Up there in the wall," continued the poor creature, "high as my chain will reach, you'll find a little book. Give it to—to—her, and tell her——"

But the words died on her lips, and she sank back, faint and speechless. The frightened housekeeper leant over her in such an extremity of terror, that she spoke to herself aloud.

"To think that this should happen to-night, when he is away," she moaned, wringing her hands together. "Oh, what shall I try now? Will brandy do her good, I wonder? Oh that I should ever have come here, to have such a secret as this put into my keeping!"

Then the thought of the brandy struck her again, and after one frightened look she quitted the garret.

I scarcely waited for her to reach the foot of the narrow stairs, before I was by the poor lady's wretched bed. I bent over her, and spoke close

to her ear, that my words might reach her dying senses.

"I promise you, as I hope for mercy, when that hour comes to me, which is on you now, that I will fulfil your request. Try to tell me to whom I must give the book."

Once more that dying smile of ineffable joy and gratitude flitted across her face, and her worn hand pressed mine.

"Sent to me by Heaven," she murmured. And in saying this her strength was spent, but her eyes glanced upwards, and I fancied I understood their meaning.

"You are trying," said I, "to tell me, that I shall find upon the book, the name of the person to whom I must give it."

Her eyes said yes, and with inexpressible anxiety they watched me as I stretched my arm, high as I could reach, upon the wall above her, till my fingers lighted upon a little niche or crevice in the stone, whence they drew forth a small pocket-book. Oh, what a look of joy lighted up her face as I hid this in my bosom.

Then I knelt beside her again, saying, with tears, "Take comfort, and be assured I will do this for you quickly. When I hear the woman returning I will go back there, and pray for you. I will thank God for his mercy in sending me here."

By a sudden effort she clasped both her hands

together, as if in prayer; but the word that faintly issued from her lips was "Praise;" and the smile came again, flickering like a pale sun-beam on her face. "Kiss me," she whispered; and, stooping, I touched her cheek with trembling lips; then, by a great effort, her lips returned the pressure, and her eyes closed, as though her last wish on earth was granted.

"You mean this kiss for her," I said, touching the book in my bosom. "I will give it her, do not fear."

The coming step warned me to escape; and I had but just got to my hiding-place, when the woman entered. But all her remedies were useless now. The faint flame of life quivered but for a moment, then sank down softly, and, with a sigh, went out.

I never saw anything so abject and terrible as that woman's fear, when she found herself alone with death. For a full minute she stood motionless, except for the trembling of her frame; then, still shaking in every limb, she covered the white face, and turned towards the door. My heart beat fast as I watched her, for I thought she would turn the key in the lock, and leave me here in this terrible place, a prisoner. But on the threshold she paused, arrested by a sudden thought.

"She remembers the book," I said; and this was the case, for returning, she put her large,

coarse hand up and down the wall, high as she could reach, failing each time to discover the crevice, which my softer fingers had lighted on at once.

“There’s nothing here,” she muttered. “It is just like these crazy folks to have such fancies.”

Apparently the sound of her own voice gave her courage, for she fetched a little common stool which stood near, and prepared to mount it, and search again ; but in doing this, her heavy woollen gown swept over the candle, which she had placed on the floor, and extinguished it. There remained still the dim light of the small lamp, but for a moment after the extinction of the candle, all things seemed plunged in darkness. I could scarcely repress the cry of thankfulness which rose to my lips, as, taking instant advantage of this moment’s darkness, I started up and fled like a shadow. Seizing the hand-rail of the balusters, I flew down the stairs, scarcely touching them with my feet, and in another second I was safe within my room.

In flitting by the terror-stricken woman, though she had not time to turn and see me, I felt she heard me, and I knew she had uttered a cry of agonized fear. But I knew also, that the sudden darkness, and the awful presence so close by her, had influenced her mind, and that when she re-lighted the candle she would reassure

herself. Nevertheless, after locking both doors—and I listened to the turning of the keys with a throbbing heart—her feet paused at my chamber, and she stood there listening a long while. Then she passed on slowly.

Some little while after this I heard a sleepy voice say, "What's the matter, Mrs. Fooks? What are you doing up at this time of night?"

"I am waiting up for master, Mr. Inman," she replied.

"Nonsense," returned the sickly usher, peevishly. "It is two o'clock; Mr. Whalley wont be home to-night."

"Well, I begin to think so too," she said. "I'll go to bed, and to sleep, if I can."

"You seem to want it," said the usher. "You look like a ghost."

She moved away, then came back. I could tell this by the shadow of the candle.

"Do you know, Mr. Inman," she said, "I thought just now I heard a step? Have you heard anything?"

"Only you," replied the usher,—"prowling about like an old cat. That's all I've heard."

"Well," she resumed, "I've been wondering if that young lady heard me too, and got frightened, and so crept out on the stairs——"

"What, Miss Rathline?" interrupted Mr. Inman. "Where are your wits to-night, Mrs.

Fooks ? Why, the girl can't put her foot to the ground."

The woman uttered a sigh almost like a groan ; then she said, heavily, " Good night. I shall go to bed."

Very soon after her retirement, the deep silence assured me, that I might traverse the whole of the lower part of the house if I would, unheard and undisturbed ; but I did not desire this. I only longed for a few minutes' talk with Mr. Pellew. Enough that I accomplished this, both of us standing in the deep shadow of the garden wall, as I recounted hurriedly my strange history. But I was not prepared for the horror with which Mr. Pellew heard it, and I was shocked at the sombre silence into which he fell.

" Try to sleep, Alice," he said at last. " The villain will not return to-night. To-morrow early we must procure a search warrant, and bring this iniquity before the light of day. But I wanted, if possible, to put my hand upon the arch-traitor himself, for at the slightest alarm here at his wicked nest, he will never return to it again."

Upon this he quitted me ; then I remembered he had not asked even to look at the pocket-book.

* * * * *

A carriage and four at the gate, and the Duke

de Briancourt bowing and smiling, and greeting every one like a prince.

"Ah, Miss Rathline," he cried, "how glad I am to meet you here, since I can give you good news. Your brother is found."

"Found!" I exclaimed, springing up madly. "And can I see him?"

"Certainly," he replied, "if you will do me the favour to accompany me. It is necessary some one should identify him. I came hither, hoping to fetch Mr. Whalley for that purpose, but I hear he is not at home."

My heart yearned to see Alfred, but what would Mr. Pellew say at my defection?

"Who found him?" I said, eagerly.

"I had that pleasure," replied the duke. "Perhaps you will remember that Mrs. Singleton left town hurriedly on this painful quest, and I, feeling it was too anxious a task for a lady, followed her, and took it off her hands."

"The lady came here," said Mrs. Fooks, whose hard face was terribly haggard by the morning light, "but master did not see her; he was ill that day. She was greatly agitated when she left. I am glad the boy is found."

"Can you tell where Mr. Whalley is?" asked the duke, carelessly.

"No, sir," replied Mrs. Fooks. "When he leaves home he never says where he is going."

"In that case, Miss Rathline, I must urge

you to accompany me," resumed the duke; "for there seems no probability of my finding Mr. Whalley. I do not think the journey will hurt your sprained foot much."

"I don't think it will," I said, bluntly.

I was resolved to go. I did not like the duke, and I was sorry to leave Mr. Pellew; but Alfred came first in my thoughts, and drove all other considerations to the winds. In two minutes more I was in the carriage, and we had driven off.

"You say we shall change horses at Exeter," I observed to the duke. "If so, I shall have time to see the doctor there, who is attending to my foot."

"Certainly," said the duke, politely.

Under this pretence I was put into a hackney coach in the old city, and drove rapidly to the inn, where I knew Maurice was gone to snatch a little sleep. When he had heard my story, he looked at me very mournfully.

"Shall you know your brother again, after an absence of nearly three years?" he asked.

"Yes, yes," I cried,—“I shall know him among a thousand."

"Take care you are not cheated, Alice," he answered. "You are right to go,—I should have begged of you to do so myself. The duke knows where Madeline is; and if he does not grow suspicious of you, he will let you know also. Be kind to her when you meet,—she will

need kindness. In another hour the magistrates will visit Whalley's house. I cannot defer that duty, even for the sake of capturing him. It is evident to me now that he has had warning, and has escaped."

"Father, perhaps," I said, dubiously.

Mr. Pellew started, and then wrung my hand kindly.

"Fool that I am!" he cried. "Rathline doubtless sold me to Whalley, before he sold Whalley to me. We must watch the coast towns now. Never mind; I will say no more to you, Alice. Good-bye."

I drove off, and was soon travelling on again with the Duke de Briancourt, who took the trouble to explain to me, that the reason of his anxiety for my presence, was to prevent a gross fraud from being practised on a lady, in Cornwall.

"You are aware that your respected father is not quite a Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*," he remarked; "and he has been trying to persuade this lady, that Alfred is not his son, but hers. Your sister warned her of his intention, but she fears, he will yet carry it out with some success. However, he will not do that while he has the Duke de Briancourt for an antagonist."

The man's triumph was evident; he was so full of elation that I hated him. Not that father deserved a single good thought of mine, but it

wasn't pleasant to hear the truth about him from those sinister lips. Moreover, I felt sure his joy arose from no good feeling ; and I trembled for Madeline. I suspected his triumph sprung from some new power he had gained over her ; for the mad, passionate, angry love with which he had pursued her for so many years, danced continually on his lips. It was in vain he strove at times to be silent ; he burst out again instantly with some snatch of song that Madeline had sung, or some glowing, loving words from play or opera, which she had uttered in her *rôle* of heroine. These he recited, sometimes with a strange pathetic tenderness, but oftener with a fierceness that made me tremble.

* * * * *

I awoke with a start, hearing the roar of the sea, and wondering for a moment where I was. We were descending a steep hill, the postilions leading the horses carefully. It was night, and the glare of the lamps threw great fantastic shadows on the road.

“Are we nearly at our journey's end ?” I said, wearily.

“Are you tired ?” asked the duke, in wonder. “We have travelled with incredible speed. We have come over seventy miles of road in eight hours. See what it is to pay well. Two miles more, Miss Rathline, and we are arrived !”

His joyousness was contagious. I began to think of the dear brother, from whom I had been separated so long, and I objected no longer to the duke's songs, although the theme was still Madeline.

These two miles seemed to me the longest of all the journey, so impatient was I to see Alfred. We drew nearer and nearer to the sea; then there loomed upon me through the darkness a large, stately, cold-looking mansion, surrounded by a gloomy wood of pines, except on that side which faced the huge waves of the Atlantic, which rolled in upon the mighty rocks with a roar that seemed to shake the solid ground.

"This is Penkivel," said the duke.

In another instant the carriage door was open, the steps were down, and like one in a dream, yet trembling with impatience, I followed the duke to a large, dimly-lighted room, where a lady met us and took me by the hand. She was pale and fragile, with a gentle, worn face, having on it the remains of great but faded beauty. She scanned me with a very earnest look, then led me to another door, which she opened, and bade me enter. This inner room was blazing with many wax lights, which for a second dazzled me, but in another instant I saw my brother standing by a table, and, springing forward, I had him in my arms.

"Alfred! Alfred!" I cried, while my tears fell

for joy. "Do you know me?—do you remember me? How grown you are! But you are not changed much. I should have known you anywhere all over the world."

I talked utter nonsense to the boy, not knowing what I was saying; then, looking up, I saw the lady and the duke regarding us.

"Lady Crehylls, are you satisfied?" he asked.

She was in tears, and for a moment her lips trembled too much to answer, then she said mournfully, "I am satisfied, duke. I have no doubt the boy is as he represents himself to be, Alfred Singleton, the brother of the young lady whom you have kindly brought to me. I am grateful to you for having saved me from a cruel deception."

"Madam, I have done my duty," returned the duke, bowing, with his hand upon his heart. Then he glanced towards me, and said, "Perhaps Miss Rathline would like to read the letter which has rendered her presence here necessary."

Upon this Lady Crehylls opened a desk standing on the table, and took thence a letter, which I saw at once was in father's writing.

"Madam," he wrote, "before quitting England for ever, I deem it my duty to inform you that your son, Aubrey Crehylls, is living. Ever since the accident by which my own son was drowned, he has borne the name of Alfred Singleton, and he has passed to the world for my

son. When I tell you, that this fraud was devised and executed by Mrs. Singleton—Madeline Sherborne—you will receive with great caution any counter-statement, she may make to you. I assure you, on the honour of a gentleman, my words are true,—your son lives; and I would advise you to take instant means to discover him. Bear in mind that he goes by the name of Alfred Singleton; and his young mind has been so imposed on, that he absolutely believes himself to be my son. Proofs of my assertion will not be wanting; and if you will forward to my agents at Liverpool the sum of two hundred pounds, they shall be sent to you forthwith. If you value your own peace, I entreat you not to permit yourself to be deceived by Mrs. Singleton, or by the fact of the boy's calling himself by a name, he has been taught to believe his own."

Here followed a further promise of fuller details on receipt of the money, and the address to which it was to be sent. I flung down the letter in disgust, and the duke, stooping for it, laid it on the table with an expressive shrug of the shoulders.

"Being somewhat in Mr. Rathline's confidence," he said, "I happened to get a glimpse of this letter, and feeling indignant at its falsehood, I travelled down hither, picking up Alfred on my way, and brought him at once before Lady

Crehylls. Thus you see, Alice, I have destroyed a very promising little speculation of your father's. But it was impossible I could remain inactive when, he sought to perpetrate so cruel a wrong on the heart of a mother."

Lady Crehylls thanked him again; but a strange, undefinable uneasiness was gathering round my own heart. I held Alfred by the hand, and gazed into his face with eager eyes. I observed he was very shy, and silent, and obedient to the slightest gesture of the duke's.

"I trust, madam," he continued, "that not the slightest doubt remains on your mind that this boy is truly Alfred Singleton, the son of Richard Rathline, but, luckily for him, bearing an honest name. Alice, will you tell Lady Crehylls, frankly, your opinion of your father's honour as a gentleman?"

Thus adjured, I was compelled to speak honestly.

"The whole letter is false," I said, "from beginning to end. Father has no truth, no honour, no honesty. This boy is my brother, and the little Aubrey Crehylls was drowned."

My words made the duke's eyes gleam with a curious look of triumph.

"I can never forget," said Lady Crehylls, falteringly, "that your elder and dearest brother, Miss Rathline, died in his noble endeavour to

save my child. Will you accept this in remembrance of him and of me?"

She drew a ring from her finger and placed it on mine. I tried to thank her, but this mention of Tom had brought my heart into my throat, and my voice was choked.

"You do right, madam, to cherish gratefully the memory of Thomas Singleton," said the duke. "His was one of the noblest and gentlest hearts that ever beat."

Surprised at this, I looked up and saw traces of unwonted emotion on the duke's hard face. But in a moment it had vanished, and he bowed himself to the door with a conventional civil smile.

"Lady Crehylls," he resumed, "we will not trespass longer on your hospitality. You will allow us to say farewell. My horses have stood too long already at the door."

Lady Crehylls did not press us to remain. I saw her heart was yearning for the relief of solitude, but in parting with Alfred, she held his hand in hers with a lingering pressure, and gazed on his face with a weary look.

"You are much changed since I saw you in the churchyard at Penkivel with your father," she said.

"Boys of his age alter very fast," interposed the duke. "Alice, you find your brother much changed, do you not?"

"Yes," I answered, hesitating a little.

Lady Crehylls, however, still looked at him wistfully.

"Yet you knew him again," she said. "But I should have scarcely recognised him myself. To be sure, I saw him only in the dusk, yet I fancied his face had made an impression on me. I looked at it very tenderly, knowing he had been the playmate of my poor boy."

Alfred vexed me by his silence.

"Why don't you speak?" I whispered.

"I remember Aubrey quite well," he said, timidly. "I loved him very much."

Lady Crehylls kissed him as he spoke, leaving tears upon his cheek, and then the duke hurried us away in great haste.

In two minutes more the carriage door was closed with a bang, and the four horses were off at a rapid pace.

"Your sprained foot is miraculously cured, Miss Rathline," said the duke, leaning forward to look at me, maliciously.

"Yes, it is," I retorted, with intense snapishness; "and perhaps it was miraculously sprained too. Where in the world are you taking us now?"

"To Madeline," he replied; and then he broke out again into his insane singing.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTINUATION OF THE NARRATIVE OF ALICE
RATHLINE.

INDFUL of Mr. Pellew's wish to discover Madeline, I was careful to say nothing to the duke to rouse his jealousy or suspicion. I strove for some time to talk to Alfred, but he seemed to be afraid to answer me, so at last we sank into silence, or roused ourselves into speech only at a change of horses, when the dull oil lamps of quiet little towns flashed on our sleepy faces.

Towards midnight, when I think we must have been travelling some three or four hours, the duke grew restless, lowering the carriage window often to ask the post-boys if they knew their way.

"Yes, your honour," they answered, "but the road is uncommon bad. I reckon we can't take the carriage all the way down."

"But you must," was the reply.

So we jolted on through a terrible road for another half-hour, and then came to a sudden stop, as it seemed to me, on the edge of a precipice.

"We are arrived, Alice," said the duke, in a tone of exultation. "Let me assist you to alight."

As I descended from the carriage, I looked around in the weird moonlight, on the wildest spot I ever beheld. I heard the sound of the sea, I saw the deep shadow of a sombre wood, on whose border there glared whitely on us a dismal house, weather-stained, with long trailing creepers hanging from window and balcony.

"Where am I?" I asked, in some trepidation.

A kindly voice answered me, "You are at St. Eglon's Hut, miss. Please walk in: I have a fire, and everything ready for you."

It was a comely, motherly woman who spoke, and I followed her without fear, through a desolate, weed-covered garden, into the dismal house. Here, however, she ushered us into a parlour, which, in spite of mildewed paper and faded furniture, was made cheerful by a wood fire and lights.

"Come and warm yourself, Alfred," I cried, gleefully.

The woman turned at the sound of my voice, and led the boy forward by the hand.

"So your name is Alfred, my dear?" she said.

"Yes, ma'am, Alfred Singleton," he answered; "and this is my sister Alice."

Now the duke was not present, Alfred's tongue seemed unloosed.

"Alfred Singleton!" repeated the woman, in a tone of wonder. "Well, that is strange indeed." And she gazed at Alfred with an amazement that made me laugh.

"What is there strange in the boy's name?" I asked.

"Oh nothing, miss, nothing," she answered, with her eyes still fixed on Alfred's face. "As you say, miss, there's nothing strange in the name. My own, perhaps, will seem more outlandish to you. I am called Grace Chagwynne, miss; and I've had the care of St. Eglon's Hut well nigh two-and-twenty years; but of all the queer things I've seen in it, I think a wedding will be the queerest."

"A wedding!" I cried aghast.

Looking up I met the duke's eyes, blazing with triumph, and all his keen, powerful face aglow with happiness. He had that moment entered. "Yes, a wedding," he said. "Congratulate me, Alice. Madeline and I are to be married to-night."

His words sounded to me like utter madness: nevertheless, I turned cold as ice, in the fear that they were true.

"How can you be married here?" I asked, scornfully. "Such a marriage in English law would be no marriage."

"English law is nothing to me or to Madeline," returned the duke. "We quit England for ever to-morrow. A priest of my own church will marry us here; and though I do not admire Madeline's taste in selecting so gloomy a spot as this for the ceremony, yet I was bound to overcome all difficulties to obey her wish. Madam, I think you said my friend was arrived?" And he turned and bowed with great politeness to the woman Chagwyne.

"He came an hour ago, sir," she replied; "but he preferred to sit by the kitchen fire, where he made tea for himself his own way, and he has been drinking it ever since."

I knew the Russians were great tea-drinkers, and so I guessed instantly this was some countryman of the duke's: perhaps truly a priest also, and bound to obey his bidding. Maybe he was a chaplain in his own household; and at this thought my heart sank indeed.

In a few minutes more the Russian—a pale silent man—had erected and decked a little altar in the mildewed parlour, and as he lighted the wax candles which stood on it, he said in French: "Monsieur le duc, we wait now only for the bride."

"I will call her," he returned eagerly. "Or no, perhaps it will be more fitting if Alice goes to her chamber-door. Miss Rathline, will you oblige me? Will you tell her all is ready, and beseech her to descend?"

To see Madeline for a few moments alone had been my earnest prayer, and I started up eagerly to obey his behest. If I could gain her ear for only five minutes, I was sure this marriage would never be.

"Where is she? Where is Madeline?" I cried.

"This good woman will lead you to her room. Be quick, Miss Rathline, I entreat you," replied the duke.

Grace Chagwynne had just entered; and, as I met her eye, I saw it was troubled, and her face wore a frightened look.

"Deary me!" she said. "Hadn't you better wait till morning? A midnight wedding is such a whisht, outlandish thing."

"Go, Miss Rathline—pray go!" interposed the duke, laying his hand lightly on my arm.

In spite of his politeness and his quiet tone, I perceived that he was trembling, and every moment's delay was raising in his heart a thousand fears. Almost as impatient myself, I walked hurriedly to the door.

"It is of no use to go to her room, miss," said Grace; "the lady is not there."

Much as I disliked the Duke de Briancourt, I pitied him now, as I saw the ghastly whiteness of his face when he heard these words.

"Where is she?" he asked, in a hoarse, unnatural voice.

"Sir," replied the woman, "she is on board the schooner lying off St. Eglon's Point. She wished to see the captain of that craft, and I signalled for him to come ashore; but he sent a boat instead with a message, to know what I wanted; and then the lady, being resolved to see him, desired the men to row her on board."

"And who is the captain?" demanded the duke.

"My brother, Michael Polgrain," she answered.

She spoke in a frightened tone, with her eyes fixed, not on the duke, but on my brother Alfred.

"How long has she been gone?" asked the former.

"A very short time before you arrived, sir. The *Penkivel* did not drop anchor till past ten o'clock."

"Is there a boat to be had? I shall go and fetch her," said the duke, sharply.

"My son Martin has a boat down in the cove, but I wont say that he'll row you to the *Penkivel*," returned Grace Chagwynne.

The Duke de Briancourt's eyes flashed distrust and anger on her as she spoke.

"I'll not forget to pay him well," he retorted, waving her to the door. "Go and fetch him."

"It is not Martin who will take money, sir, for rowing you to the *Penkivel*. No amount of

money will bribe him to do a hurt to my brother Michael," said Grace, quietly.

The duke, after a moment's bewilderment, burst into a laugh, saying "Ah, I had forgotten the fellow was a smuggler. My good woman, I am not in the Preventive service."

"I don't know what you are, sir, but I am sure Martin won't take you to the *Penkivel*. And there is no need; the lady said she would return soon," said Grace.

"I can't wait!" cried the duke, impatiently. "This delay is maddening. Alice, the smugglers will not suspect you to be in the coastguard service; will you go on board this craft, and bring back Madeline? You need have no fear—the sea is like glass."

"I am not afraid," I said, quietly.

"Mrs. Chagwynne," cried the duke, "fetch your obliging son and his boat at once. I presume he will not suspect this young lady of a design to seize his uncle and all the cargo."

Mrs. Chagwynne glanced at my small slight figure with a smile.

"I don't think Martin will object to take you, miss," she said.

"Go then—go at once," returned the duke, almost pushing her from the room. "Alice," he continued, "I will never forget this kindness of yours. Choose what you will, and I will give it to you. Bring Madeline away quickly

from these fascinating smugglers, and you shall have the diamonds of a duchess. Ay, my charming Miss Rathline, how hard it is in this world to be happy even for five minutes! I was so full of joy a short time ago, and now I am on a rack of suspense and agony. Why did Madeline go to see this accursed smuggler to-night? Does she think that real smugglers are like smugglers of the opera? Pity me, Alice, I am going distracted!"

Thus he rambled on, while fifteen or twenty minutes went slowly by. How he paced the room, how impatiently he looked at his watch, I will not say. And as he walked to and fro, he continually impressed on me, that I was to relate to Madeline every particular, that had occurred at Penkivel. I thought I had something to relate to Madeline even stranger than this; but I kept my own counsel.

"The boat is ready, miss."

The welcome words sent a glow through all my veins. I stooped and kissed Alfred.

"Good-bye, duke," I cried.

"Here is my cloak. Wrap yourself in this, Miss Alice. I shall watch for your return like—like a bridegroom," he answered.

Again his agitation, his fear, his long-enduring mad love, forced me to pity him.

"Do not come with me to the boat," I said to him. "I shall go more quickly with Grace."

"I obey you," he answered, flinging himself into a chair, wearily.

In the short walk to the little cove where the boat waited, I resolved to trust Grace Chagwynne. She had a face I liked.

"Listen to me," I said, earnestly. "I entreat you to do me a kindness. This morning I parted with a gentleman named Pellew. He is searching for Madeline; he told me he should come to this very spot; he may arrive now at any instant. The favour I ask you is to give my young brother into his keeping. On no account, happen what may, let him depart with the duke, supposing Mr. Pellew forces the duke to leave. Will you promise me this?"

"Yes, yes," she said, quickly.

"My brother has been hidden from me nearly three years," I continued, breathlessly. "I trust to you to put him safely into Mr. Pellew's hands."

"I will do it, miss," she answered.

Here came the soft splash of oars, and in another minute I was out on the moonlit sea. The boat was a stout sea-going boat, and with only one rower she made but little way. As we rounded St. Eglon's Point, I saw the *Penkivel* lying about a mile off, the sea so clear and silvery round about her, that it seemed a mirror, in which her image was reflected daintily, with tapering masts pointed downwards, and fairy

rigging hanging like cobwebs on the waves. When we had got clear of the Point, I perceived there lay on the other side a tiny beach of glistening white sand, and a little cove, wonderfully sheltered, round which stood a few cottages. From this cove, when we were about midway between St. Eglon's Point and the ship, a small boat shot out, and Martin rested on his oars a moment to regard it.

"That looks like Uncle Giles, the fisher," he said, "but I can't make out no ways, who he has got with him."

Martin rowed faster after this, and I soon found myself on the deck of the *Penkivel*. I saw Madeline instantly. She was seated on a heap of sails at the foot of the mainmast, while a tall man, with a face so pale and bloodless that it seemed a dead man's, leant over her, one arm grasping the mast, and the other stretched towards St. Eglon's. "Yes, but the real place is scarcely so ghastly to me as the shadow of it," I heard him say. "You upon the land, and I upon the sea, must have the shadow of St. Eglon's Hut always with us."

"Uncle," said Martin, "the company at the Hut are anxious about the lady, and here's a friend come in my boat to fetch her."

"Is he come for me?" said Madeline, starting up. "I am ready."

Her face was death-white, and in all her aspect

I saw a change, a something reckless and defiant. I perceived she fancied the Duke de Briancourt had come for her. I was hidden behind the mast, but I stood forward now.

"Madeline, it is I—Alice Rathline," I said, quietly.

"You, Alice—and here!" she cried. "What is the meaning of this?"

In a few words I told her of my journey to Exeter with Mr. Pellew, and my subsequent journeys to Penkivel and St. Eglon's with the Duke de Briancourt.

"And he is waiting for me? Let me go," said Madeline.

"Not till you have heard me," I returned, resolutely. "I have a message for you from Mr. Pellew."

As I spoke, Martin, his uncle, and one or two others standing near, courteously went forward, so we were left together alone on the after part of the deck; then, as she sat down again, I fell upon my knees, and put my arms about her.

"Mr. Pellew bade me say that, years ago, in a hasty impulse of anger—just anger, he owns—you forsook him to marry a good man, a better man—he confesses that too—than he is. Now he sees you leagued with a bad man, and he implores you, by the memory of his and your early love, not to forsake him a second time for such a man as this—not to put your life and peace

into his evil hands, until at least you have heard what he has to tell you. Madeline, he has things to say that will alter your whole life—those were his very words. I cannot utter them with the earnest strength with which he spoke them, but I can and do say, that if you will not listen, your repentance will be bitter indeed. I can and do say, that he is your truest and best friend, and but for a terrible duty that has fallen on him, he would be here now, pleading with you for your life in my stead.”

I ceased, with flushed cheeks, and arms clinging to her lovingly, for since I had seen Alfred safe and well, I had forgiven her all the past. She looked at me with worn, despairing eyes, tearless and haggard.

“I can never be anything more to Maurice than a dream,” she said. “I am unworthy of a single thought of his. He would despise me if he knew the truth, and all his love would turn to contempt. As for the duke, he has stepped in at the turning point of my life, and done me a service by which he has bought me. That is the truth. Alice, you have seen your brother?”

“Yes, yes,” I answered; “and Lady Crehylls, and father’s wicked, cheating letter. Madeline, listen to Mr. Pellew, I entreat you.”

“Tell me all that happened at Penkivel,” she interposed, feverishly: “that is what I wish to hear.”

Unwillingly and hurriedly I told it ; then I urged her again not to throw away life and happiness in this hasty, wicked way. I implored her not to give me the anguish of feeling, that I had failed in my mission. I besought her, not to inflict such sharp agony upon a heart that loved her, because he was not here to plead to her himself.

"But the duke has bought me," she reiterated, wearily. "And I am worthy of him, and he of me ; we are plotters, schemers, liars both. Alice, Alice, urge me no more ! I would rather die than put my hand in Maurice Pellew's."

"If you only knew on what duty he deferred his search for you," I cried, passionately, "you would not let me lose his cause. How could he guess you had promised to marry your mad lover this very night?"

"So you know it," said Madeline, rising. "Let us go, Alice. Why should I linger any longer to fulfil my promise? The greatest wrong I could do to Maurice, would be to listen to the pleadings of my own heart, or of his. I am not so lost as that. I should be a wretch if I let him take such a wife as I should be ; Alice, I shall be happier, even with the Duke de Briancourt, than I could ever hope to be with him."

"But why marry him to-night, and at that dismal place, St. Eglon's Hut?" I cried, in angry impatience.

“I chose the spot myself,” she said. “There, where my life’s miseries began—there, where a great injustice and wrong was done to me, let me consummate my sorrows, and pay the price with which I have bought justice. Alice, now that Lady Crehylls has seen your brother, no one henceforth will make her believe that Alfred Singleton is her lost boy. Martin, where is the boat? I am ready.”

She turned from me so resolutely, that I uttered not another word.

For an instant I hesitated. “Shall I tell her now?” I said, and I put my hand upon the little book in my bosom; but the strange place, the rough faces all around, deterred me. I would defer this terrible revelation till we were alone. Here, before so many witnesses, it would be cruel to speak. Even when rowing back with Martin, I felt I should not dare breathe in her ear in his presence so dreadful a secret. Thus my sole trust now lay in the hope that Maurice Pellew, following the instinct, which told him Madeline would go to St. Eglon’s Hut, had already reached that ill-omened place, and we should meet him when we landed. Then I counted the hours it would require to travel from Exeter, and the hours needed to fulfil the dismal duty laid upon him there, and I came to the conclusion, that unless he had turned aside to pursue Whalley, he might certainly be even now at St. Eglon’s. In this

thought I was content to be silent, while Madeline crossed the deck, and addressed the tall man with the grey-white face, with whom I had first seen her conversing.

“Michael Polgrain,” she said, sorrowfully, “your sympathies have ever been with the wrong-doer, not with me, not with him whom your silence slew; but on this night, when I bid you farewell for ever, I wish to say that you have my forgiveness. Yes, I forgive you, although the misery to which I am henceforth sold, is the fruit of that blight which was laid upon my life by your cruel silence, when you let my father die for your foster-brother’s sin. I forgive you, because the agony of a great remorse lies as darkly on my soul now, as it has done on yours through all your sad life.”

Her hand, which she had half extended towards him, dropped by her side untouched, for at this instant a voice rose out of the sea, at sound of which Michael Polgrain started from us, and rushing to the ship’s side, he looked down into the waves with a face of ashy whiteness.

The water round about the *Penkivel* was in deep darkness now, for she no longer lay in the glistening silver of the moon’s path. The shining crescent was fast sinking behind the great hills, which stood about the bay, and their sombre shadows, flung far across the water,

trembled darkly on the waves. In this darkness, a little boat was dimly visible, lying close by the tall hull of the *Penkivel*, and the voice arising from it cried shrilly, "I hear this ship is going to France. I'll give the captain twenty pounds for a passage in her."

"Is that you, Uncle Giles?" said Martin.

"It's me rowing," answered the old man; "but I don't want no passage to France—my travels be nearly over, I reckon—'tis this gentleman here—a stranger, who will thank 'ee and pay 'ee well too, ef you'll take 'un."

"Go 'long home, Uncle Giles," bawled Martin; "there's no berth here for strangers."

"Where's the captain?" cried the eager voice again, as a figure started up in the boat. "Fifty pounds, captain!—I'll give fifty pounds for a passage to France."

"Take him on board!" said the deep voice of Michael Polgrain.

"Throw him a rope!" cried Martin.

"All right!" answered the old fisherman, as with dexterous hands he caught the rope flung to him, and his little boat was drawn in close to the *Penkivel's* side.

"What's uncle about?" muttered Martin. "We don't want any landlubbers here. Give a hand to the fellow, and help him aboard, can't ye?" he said to one of the crew.

"It is Whalley!" whispered Madeline, in an amazed voice, to me.

It was indeed the schoolmaster, and, remembering what I had seen in his house, I turned cold with horror, as his sharp, thin face, rose over the ship's side.

"Good night!" cried the fisherman, as he rowed away.

When his boat was clear of the ship, and the sound of the oars came faintly over the dark water, Michael Polgrain, who had been watching its course, turned quickly, and walked up close to his new passenger. Then, with a sudden grip, he seized him by the throat, and flung him on the deck.

"Mathew Carbis!—liar and murderer!" he cried. "Have I got you in my hands at last?"

As these words rang in our ears, Madeline uttered a wild shriek and fell upon her knees, clinging to me convulsively with both arms. And thus she was borne onwards, as I and many of the crew rushed forward to look on the villain lying writhing in Michael's grasp.

"See here, soas," he said, huskily, looking up at the eager faces pressed around him, "here lies the villain, who for twenty-two years has stolen from me the light of the blessed sun. Here lies a murderer, who, simulating death, fled safely in the dress his victim wore, while honest men died for him, or living, suffered a

tide of shame, anguish, and remorse unknown to his dastard heart. Put irons on him quickly, or I shall kill him as he lies at my feet like a writhing snake."

The disgust, with which Michael Polgrain spurned him with his foot, and then strode away from the wretch, as the sailors ironed him, was so strong and terrible, that it shook his tall frame like a reed.

"Mathew Carbis!" said Madeline, in a dreadful whisper. "No, it cannot be,—he is dead,—he was murdered in the wood of Crehylls."

"Oh blind, blind!" cried Michael; "blinder than I, who have not seen the sun for twenty summers. Come and look upon the truth at last."

He caught Madeline by the wrist, and led her onward till she stood before the wretch Whalley, or Carbis, who, in double irons, sat cowering and ghastly on the deck.

"Hold the lantern lower," said Michael.

The sailors obeyed, and the light fell upon the haggard, livid face, on every line of which his crime seemed written legibly. To look upon that face, and doubt that he was Mathew Carbis, or deny that he was the double-dyed traitor and coward that Michael named him, was impossible. With hands wrung together, and eyes piteous in their fear and pain, Madeline saw the truth, and, shivering, turned away in silence.

“Soas,” said Michael, in an earnest voice, calling the crew around him by a gesture of his hand, “ef any of you still doubt my word, that this traitor lying here is the man Mathew Carbis, long thought to be dead and buried, let him read this letter. It was writ and sent to me by an honest gentleman, upon whose life no lie ever rested. Friends, I am no scholard. I know the signs of the sea and of the sky, and even on the land I’d find my way by the stars alone, but books and writings are blank things to me. I have had to use another’s eyes to tell me the words of this; but if there’s one among you a scholard, let him stand up and read the letter out to his comrades.”

“The young lady,—ask the young lady!” cried many voices.

I turned to Madeline, but she saw the writing was Maurice Pellew’s, and her trembling lips refused to utter a word. Then I took the letter from Michael’s hand, and read it out, nearly as follows :—

“By the confession of his cousin, Richard Rathline, who has betrayed him at last, I know that Mathew Carbis is alive. For the sake of the jewels and watches in his pack, he murdered a hawker named Nathaniel Strangways, and by a series of devilish artifices, which I need not detail, the world was deceived into taking this

man's body for that of his slayer. He had himself—as you too well know, Michael—been struck down in the wood that day by a blow from a young impulsive hand, and from the temporary insensibility caused by this, he was recovered by his unhappy friend, Walter Sherborne. Doubtless, it was thus that gentleman's coat became blood-stained. To him also he gave a garbled history of his rencontre with Lord Crehylls. But I abstain from further details. Enough that the villain has escaped for years, and I fear he may even again escape. Look out for him, Michael. There is a tendency in such creatures to return to the scene of their crimes. Moreover, not daring to travel in any public stage or packet boat, he will be the more likely to seek to hide in lonely, inaccessible places. Bear in mind that he calls himself at present Whalley, and by dint of arduous deception and caution he has gained for himself, and his establishment a character of respectability. What this whited sepulchre may hold within it, I go down now to see."

As I slowly read this letter through, as he heard that his cousin—who, doubtless, on finding the knapsack at Bristol, had guessed the truth, and forced the confession of it from him—had at last betrayed him, the wretched Carbis lost his hold on hope, and sunk down into sullen apathy. Yet he made one effort more.

"I am not Whalley. My name was never Whalley," he said, in a hard voice.

"Who can identify him?" asked Michael.

Then Madeline lifted her face from her hands, and looked at him with a momentary shrinking glance.

"I can," she answered. "I recognise in him the schoolmaster Whalley, who came to my house in London when the child Alfred Singleton was lost. Oh, Alice! Alice! Alice! my heart is broken!"

All through the ship rang her terrible cry, and then, as though this utterance of her misery had relieved her, she sank into sudden silence, and lay crouched on the deck quiet, and apparently calm.

"Comrades," said Michael in that slow solemn voice of his, "are you satisfied that this is the man?" Then every one of the crew held up his hand in assent.

"That lady," continued Michael—"she is Walter Sherborne's daughter—has told you she recognises him as Whalley; I tell you, I recognise him as Mathew Carbis. I knew his evil face again, the moment I set my eyes upon it. Soas, when the sun is taken from a man, he does not easily forget the last thing he saw in sunshine. That murderer's face, as it lay upon the sward, when my young foster-brother hit him down, was almost the last sight I ever saw with the sun shining on it, in the wood of Crehylls. Am I likely to forget it, comrades?"

"No! no! he is the man!" cried every voice.

"Moreover," said Michael, "when he came down to these parts months ago, searching for the child, whom his cruelty had driven out into the woods, I saw him, and knew him; and in my blindness, I fancied he was come to haunt me, from another world. I tell you this, lest you should think Mr. Pellew's letter alone made me see, in his face, the face of Mathew Carbis."

"Say no more, cap'en!" cried the men. "Cain himself hadn't got the mark plainer on his brow than this man have."

There was a momentary silence, a breathless silence, then Michael's voice fell upon the ear again, solemn and slow.

"Comrades, since you all know and are sartain the man is Mathew Carbis, I ask you, what we shall do with him?"

Silence again, then whispers ran to and fro among the crew, and lastly an old man came forward as spokesman.

"I reckon, cap'en," he said, "we be all men ourselves living outside the laws, and there edn't waun of us willin' to risk his liberty for the saake of puttin' this man in gaol. It edn't fitty honest men should suffer for such as he."

"You speak truly," answered Michael; "but if we let 'un escape it will be a shame to us."

"Then let us hang 'un ourselves," said a young sailor, in a grave voice.

The proposition was a startling one; but it evidently met with consideration, both from the crew and the captain.

"Friends," observed Michael, "if we go into port the *Penkivel* and her cargo will be seized. Now, shall I rob all of you who have got a venture in this freight? and shall I rob him (never mind his name) who trusted me with hundreds of pounds to buy the cargo? Shall I rob him and you, I say, and put fathers of families in gaol, and let our brave ship be seized and broke up, only to give a reptile a few weeks more of life till the assizes come? Think of it well. That's the cost we must pay if we run into port, for the sake of giving up this Mathew Carbis to the laws."

"We wont do it," cried the men. "Let's hang 'un at waunce."

They crowded round the wretched villain Carbis, and seized him roughly. I will not depict his abject terror, or repeat his abject cries for mercy and his frantic appeals for help, which rang uselessly across the sea.

"Stop!" cried Michael; "I wont see even a viper hanged without a trial. If three men will volunteer, I'll make tha fourth, and take 'un ashore in tha boat."

"Cap'en," said the old man again, "ef it was to do some braave deed, et edn't three men would volunteer, but every man among us would

start up eager to lose his life at a word from you ; but to carry this villun ashore is to risk a prison, and the loss of all we have aboard. And I, for waun, wont lay my head en the saame jail weth Mathew Carbis. I don't sot the vally of his wicked life, agin the smallest keg of sperrits en tha hold of tha *Penkivel*. But as for a trial, we are aal agreed to give 'un as fair a trial, as arra judge and jury en tha land."

There was a murmur of assent from all the crew, at sound of which a gleam of satisfaction shone on Michael Polgrain's grey face.

"Comrades, you are right," he cried ; "but I reckoned it just to argue the matter out with ee aal. I'll nevar rob my employers, and the awners of the ship and cargo, for such as Mathew Carbis."

Then, with a sudden change in look and manner, he turned to Madeline and me.

"If you wish to go ashore," he said, "Martin can take you, in the same boat in which you came."

"No, no," exclaimed Madeline ; "I cannot land at St. Eglon's Hut. Anywhere else you please, but not there."

She seemed terror-struck at the thought, equally afraid, I fancied, to see Mr. Pellew or the Duke de Briancourt.

Michael did not argue the point with her, or urge us to land ; perhaps he was unwilling to send

his nephew from him, or maybe his present duties absorbed his mind, for he began instantly to issue commands to the crew.

“Weigh anchor!” he cried, in a loud voice.

When this was done, all sails were set, and the *Penkivel*, like a bird, flew out to sea.

* * * * *

Through the long, long hours, while the ship, with all her white wings spread, went gallantly, steadily westwards, no sound except the tread of feet on deck broke the silence of the cabin, where Madeline and I watched and wondered. She had flung herself upon a couch, and lay there motionless, her face hidden in her arms. Whatever the horror on her soul might be, it was speechless; whatever her agony of remorse for some wrong done, she uttered no word of weakness, or of grief. Silently the great battle in her heart went on, and seeing, dimly, it was sharper and fiercer than any warfare my spirit would ever know, I resolved not to vex her with false words of peace, or give her the barren comfort which my shallower soul could offer. She would struggle onwards herself to the light, and my help would only encumber her broken spirit; for I did not forget, that in looking on my face, she saw the daughter of Richard Rathline—the man who had duped and cheated her for years, and my voice could scarcely be pleasant

in her ears. My reckless, wicked father had all along known the facts of this sad history, and though twice he might have tried to sell the truth to Lord Crehylls, yet he had held it back because he had found the lie pay better with Madeline. As I remembered this, my cheeks burnt with shame for the parentage I had, but thinking suddenly of my dear good brother, tears fell softly on the shame, and I was comforted.

Thus we two were very silent in the cabin ; and knowing there was yet another great and terrible sorrow unspoken, but ready to fall, I prayed that before Madeline heard it she might sleep ; and while praying, being very weary, this being the second night in which I had had but little rest, I fell quietly asleep myself.

* * * * *

A sudden swing of the ship awoke me, and I saw Michael Polgrain standing looking upon me gloomily. Then Madeline started to her feet and came towards him hastily.

“ Stop this, I implore you ! ” she cried. “ I have had enough and too much of wild justice.” But Michael shook his head.

“ It is borne in on me that it must be carried through,” he said, “ though the end to me may be bitter. But I have tried to save the men from being tried by English law for this deed.

We are out of English waters now, and the American flag is flying at the masthead. Oh, miss, you slept on a good resting-place. What does the Word say, lying there beneath your head?"

The Book was open at the vision of Ezekiel, and I read out—And "the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels; and when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them. And they had the hands of a man under their wings." * * And "they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go they went: they turned not."

The pale face of Michael Polgrain was lighted up now with a strange enthusiasm, and I saw with sorrow that, if he had needed anything to confirm his purpose, he found it in this.

"It may be," he said, earnestly, "that things look to us like a blind fate; but the wheels of Chance and Time have a living spirit in them, and there is a man's hand beneath their wings guiding them as they go. And mark, miss, how they go straight on: they never turn. They must go where the spirit wills, these great, fiery, crushing wheels of fate. Would you have me setting myself up against them? I know I am only a poor man, and no scholar, and you may think I am reading the vision wrong. Can you give me a better meaning to them, miss?" he asked, and a troubled look came into his eye as he spoke.

Alas, I could not. I was too ignorant, too unlearned, even to speak. Madeline, too, with a new pain upon her face, was dumb.

"They never turn," repeated Michael; "and who am I, that I should seek to turn the course of them that never turn? If I did, I should fall crushed beneath the fate from which I run. Why was the murderer brought on board my ship, if it was not for this? And how do we know it is not for good? Isn't there something said further on, about a wheel being set in the midst of a wheel?"

I answered, falteringly, "Yes;" and then Michael, beckoning us to follow; left the cabin.

The *Penkivel* was lying-to against the wind, most of her sails furled, and the ship wonderfully steady, the sea being still calm. On the main deck, whither we followed Michael, we found, sitting solemnly, the strange, wild judge and jury, with their prisoner, Mathew Carbis, before them.

Michael Polgrain was a witness, and gave his evidence with deep emotion, though he touched but for an instant on his long remorse, and the exile of his foster-brother. Then he stood aside for others to speak. And I wondered, as I saw two men come forward and swear to facts respecting Mathew Carbis. One was the old man who had been spokesman for the crew, the other was a man of forty-five, who recognised the very

watch the murderer wore, as belonging to Nathaniel Strangways.

"I was a young farmer then," he said, "and I had just come into a little money, which I spent as hard and as fast as I could. I bought this watch of the hawker, and wore it for a week, then I tired of it, and swopped it for another, paying him for the change. In the week I had it, I made a mark upon it, which I should know anywhere."

As he spoke, he opened the watch, and showed us on the gold of the inner case a curious circle, well marked.

"Is it a wheel?" said Michael, looking at it.

"I meant it for the sun," replied the man; "and I needn't be shaamed to tell ee how it was. My sweetheart's name was Phœbe, and I had heard say that Phœbus meant the sun. And I reckon, comrades, up round my father's house you'd find many a tree, with this same mark upon it, that you see there 'pon tha pedlar's watch."

Then the old man came forward.

"Twenty-two years ago," he said, "I was a thatcher, and I knowed Maister Sherborne, and Mathew Carbis, and Nat Strangways well. And though, when this man coomed aboard in the darkness, I didn't seem to know his face, yet, with the light on him, it came back to my mind like a pictur—the saame faace, only young and

handsome—and I said, that's Mathew Carbis. And now, comrades, I've a whisht story to tell ee. You've heerd how I went up to 'sizes to speak agin Mr. Sherborne, and I wondered he never said a word for his own self, good or bad, but I wondered more when I saw him waunce laugh out loud. That was when they were tellin' that Mathew Carbis had no shoes upon his feet when he was washed ashore, and the gentlemen said, 'twas no doubt the rough tide and the storm that took them off, they being big for him. Then Mr. Sherborne laughed. The Spring arter this I was in the wood at Crehylls, when a graat adder hissed at me from a thicket, and I sprang in 'pon the oogly thing and killed it, I ded. And when I turned it ovvar weth my foot I seed a goulden ring lying on tha grass, and then, stirring the weeds about, I found another and another. 'Here's a treasure,' I says, 'and I'll dig for et.' Comrades, I marked the spot, and I fetched a spade, and comed there afore sunrise, and diggin', I found a pair of shoes—Mathew Carbis's shoes. I knowed 'em in a minute, for tha buckles were made in a queer fashion, smaller than tha ould gentry wore round our way. Then I took the shoes en my hand, and it flashed over me sudden as lightning, that tha dead man found by the rever could never have worn they shoes 'pon his feet. They were too small. But I was a poor man, and I thought 'twas better to keep

a quiet tongue than speak, and lose the gould I'd found. But tha rings, which for sartain fell out of Nat Strangways' pack, never did me no good. As for the shoes, I buried 'em again; but here's tha buckles now en this leather purse." And so saying he laid them on the deck.

"Miss Sherborne," said Michael, "do you wish to speak?"

"My mother!" faltered Madeline. "Let me ask him if my mother lives?"

But as she came forward a step or two, the wretch Carbis turned his face away.

"I wont see Walter Sherborne's daughter!" he shrieked in a shrill voice. "Don't let her speak to me."

Then I stood up, and in a low tone, growing in courage as I went on, I spoke first of the knapsack so long in father's possession, and how Mr. Pellew had shown it to me in the chaise, and I had read Nathaniel Strangways' name upon it. But before I went on further in my tale—before I touched by a single word on the dreadful sorrow and death I had seen in Whalley's house—I drew near to Madeline, and put my arms about her softly. Then I told it. And lastly, weeping bitterly—for all my courage fled at sight of her great agony—I took the little book from my bosom and put it in her hands. "With this kiss," I said—"your mother's kiss—the last her lips ever gave."

As I touched her ice-cold cheek, the horror on Madeline's marble face dropped like some terrible mask she had flung away, and in its place there came a flood of anguish and warm tears, bringing her back to life. Claspings her arms about me, she kissed me wildly, crying I had touched her mother's lips with mine; I had seen her die, I had comforted her, and henceforth I was dear to her for ever. But as she spoke, her wonderful strength for the first time failed her; her eyes, falling on the evil face of that traitor, who stood there trembling, she put her hands before them with a sudden shriek, and fell down at my feet.

She was carried to the little cabin as tenderly as though she were a child, and laid upon the bed. And here, as I sat by her, Martin brought me the sentence they had passed on Mathew Carbis.

Death, with one hour's time for confession and prayer.

* * * *

I pass over his prayers, and cries, and attempt to bribe the men, with offers of the large sum he had concealed about him,—I pass over, too, his threats, to come to this, that half an hour before the time, he called for pen and paper, and wrote down his guilt, doing it even in a scholarly way, with pride of penmanship. They brought it to me to read; but I laid it by, to close the

door, and shut out every dreadful sound that reached us from the deck. Nevertheless, when a weight of minutes had gone by like heavy hours throbbing on our hearts, there fell upon our ears the dreary dull sound of a blow upon the waves; and then we knew that Mathew Carbis was dead, and buried in the sea.

CHAPTER IX.

ALICE RATHLINE'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

ADELINE still lay upon the bed silent ; and but for the shudder which ran through her frame as the body of the murderer fell into the sea, I might have thought her senses were mercifully shut up in the sleep of exhaustion. With a repugnance which sent a chill through my veins, I took the confession of that arch villain Carbis in my hand, and leaning over Madeline, I asked if she would hear it. What a look of anguish and of pain she gave me, as her pale lips murmured " Yes."

" And fetch Michael," she said. " It is right he should hear it also. This wild deed that he has done is murder before the law ; let him gather what consolation he can from hearing that it was justice. As for me, I have been unjust, and neither the voice of the dead nor of the living can ever bring me comfort again."

As she spoke she covered her face, as though she thought her agony too great for human eye

to look upon; and it was thus she heard the tale which I read out with shrinking lips.

I will not honour a bad man by writing down word for word what he said. I will give only the substance of his confession. In it he divulged unwittingly the exceeding subtlety and treachery of his nature, as well as the relentless cruelty with which he had gratified every selfish passion. Here is his statement,—not in his own words, but as I remember it :—

“ Mrs. Sherborne,” he said, “ loved me, before she ever saw the weak foolish man to whom she was sold. He was a man so weak naturally, and so doubly weak now, through the enervation of drink, that I found it easy to twist him round my finger. For my own purpose, I instilled into his mind a great jealousy of the young Lord Crehylls. I played the part of Iago with daily, hourly, unwearying skill, and with such success, that beyond a passing shadow or so, he never suspected my passion for his beautiful, and wretched wife. He was anxious in his jealousy to take her away from the neighbourhood of the foolish boy, whose romantic admiration I had magnified into a desperate and determined love; but for this purpose he lacked the needful money. Hence my daily hints and warnings chafed him the more, and one day he turned upon me fiercely, and grew quarrelsome as a madman. ‘ Show me the way to leave this cursed place,’

he cried, 'or cease for ever your vile insinuations.'

"Then I told him of a way. I proposed that we should rob the pedlar Strangways, who was a jeweller by trade, and who hawked watches, chains, and rings, having in his case gold well worth two hundred pounds. At first he would not listen, but at last gave in weakly, as he always did. Then we agreed upon a plan. We would watch for the hawker in the wood of Crehylls at dusk, when he passed through it on his way to his lodgings. Here we would conclude a pretended deal for some of Mrs. Sherborne's jewels, and to clinch the bargain, give him a drink of drugged wine from my flask. The rest would be easy, and on recovering he might be persuaded he had been robbed while drunk.

"After agreeing to this plot, Sherborne wavered again and again, veering like the wind; but I knew he would yield at last, for I had taken care to make him desperate, by winning at cards every shilling he had.

"On the day fixed for the deed, I taunted Sherborne with cowardice, and we quarrelled furiously again, the noise of our dispute being audible to the servant; for, thinking it might be well for me to appear on ill terms with him, I opened the door, that his words might reach her. And soon after this I left the Hut. I

went to the wood of Crehylls, where that struggle occurred between me, and the young lord which the captain of this ship witnessed.

“When I recovered the effects of the blow, which had stunned me, I found Walter Sherborne supporting my head on his shoulder, while he held a small flask of brandy to my lips. I told him what had happened; and being full of rage and hatred against the young villain who had struck me, I inflamed Sherborne against him also. I told him Lord Crehylls had openly avowed to me his intention to leave England, and take Mrs. Sherborne with him if she would go. I said, he had declared he had no fear of a poor bankrupt, ruined gambler like Sherborne; and I added that my indignant reply to this had so roused the lad’s vindictive temper, that he had set upon me with murderous rage. ‘And doubtless when he left,’ I said, ‘he thought me dead or dying. It would be a good revenge to make the world believe me dead, and have him tried for the murder.’

“With an oath, Walter Sherborne said that it would. Then, sullenly, he swore he would kill his wife with his own hands, if he thought the insolent boast of the young Crehylls was true.

“I was glad to see his anger, as it showed he was completely duped, and I knew I could carry out my own schemes in safety.

“ I was not long in recovering from my faintness ; and with my hat on, the cut on my forehead was scarcely seen. When darkness fell, and the hawker entered the wood, whistling as he came, I was ready for him, my head being as clear and my strength as unshaken as ever. As I had foreseen, he fell easily into the trap. Mrs. Sherborne’s jewels, which she had that morning put into my hands, were sold to him at a low price, and safely locked in his pack. Then I proposed a drink of wine, which he took, falling back insensible even as he laid down the goblet.

“ The darkness in the wood was intense now, and under cover of this I bade Sherborne take the pack and wait for me in a thicket near by. I had not dared trust him, as I knew him to be weak ; but the hawker was a dead man when he had swallowed that draught of wine.

“ When I returned to Walter Sherborne I was metamorphosed into Nathaniel Strangways ; and in the first shock he started up to defend himself, not recognising me.

“ ‘ What have you done ? ’ he cried. ‘ Where is the pedlar ? ’

“ ‘ You can hardly think that I was such a fool as to let him live to tell on us,’ I replied coolly. ‘ He’ll never peach either on you or me.’

“ I have said Sherborne was weak ; but I was scarcely prepared to see such an exhibition of

weakness as he showed now. He flung the knapsack from him and burst into tears like a woman. Then followed reproaches, and an agony of remorse which I had not time to heed. He had unlocked the pack to look at its contents, and when he cast it down, a case of rings was scattered. I gathered them up, searching for them as carefully as the darkness would permit. Then, cutting a stake, I sharpened it, and with this I dug a hole in which to bury my shoes, which I had tried vainly to place on the pedlar's feet. During this time Sherborne seemed in a sort of stupor, his eyes fixed on me like a madman's.

“‘Get rid of that coat before you go home,’ I said; ‘it is stained with blood from this cut of mine. That will look suspicious. Go to your own house. I will come to you by and by, when your wife and servant are gone to rest, and then we will divide the spoil.’

“‘I’ll have none of it,’ he screamed. ‘I never meant this. You know I did not. You are a villain.’

“‘It wont do for us to quarrel,’ I answered, quietly. ‘The law would see no difference between your guilt and mine; but there is no risk of discovery. If the hawker is found he will be taken for me—I have provided for that; and then let the young lord bear the blame.’”

Here Carbis goes on to say that he never in-

tended really to see Mr. Sherborne again, having agreed to meet Mrs. Sherborne that night, and take her to Bristol, where she fancied he would procure a berth for her in a ship going to America. But as he had duped the husband, so he duped the wife, and that wretched lady, after spending a year or two very miserably, sank gradually into insanity. The villain further relates, that finding it expensive to maintain her at an asylum, he had, when established in his school, taken her under his own charge, and, according to his own statement, "treated her as kindly as was compatible with safety."

While hiding at Bristol, he was discovered by father, and the papers being then full of the murder, it was not difficult for father to guess the truth and tax him with it; which he did, after finding the knapsack. The unhappy Mrs. Sherborne was then lying in lodgings, ill of fever, brought on by fatigue and excitement. Through her illness Carbis was able to keep from her, all the dreadful history of her husband's trial, and death. Doubtless, it was when these facts came to her knowledge, that her mind gave way.

As for Mr. Sherborne, Carbis declared he could not understand wherefore he kept silent at his trial, when assuredly a full confession would have saved his life. He expected this confession, he said, and prepared himself to escape to America on hearing it. But Mr. Sherborne

had often conversed with him on suicide, and he certainly had that determined tendency towards it, which often possesses the minds of men whose reason is shaken by the vice of drunkenness. Moreover, Mr. Sherborne, being wrecked in fortune and happiness, might look on death as a relief, and perhaps prefer this to confessing himself an accomplice in a robbery, if not a murder. His firm conviction also, that his wife had eloped with Lord Crehylls, may have so maddened him with jealousy and the hope of revenge, that this motive alone might have been strong enough to tempt him to leave the world deceived, with regard to Carbis's death. And since he was firmly resolved to die himself, and eager to gain from Mr. Lanyon's remorse a sure friend for his daughter, it was not likely he would divulge a secret which would deprive her of a succourer, and himself of all chance of revenge. His eagerness for this appears, by his letter to Madeline, to have been the last feeling of his life. By his firm belief in the elopement of his wife with Lord Crehylls, it is easy to see how great was the influence Carbis had gained over him. The serpent who had whispered in his ear, the false friend who had betrayed him, he never once suspected as the real slayer of his peace. Perhaps in his secret heart he could not lower his wife to that misery. He could believe she had

left her home with Lord Crehylls, but not with Mathew Carbis.

I leave out in this villain's statement his boast of respectability, arduously built up—his hypocrisy, and pretence of having expiated his crime by long years of industry and honour. I omit also his lying vaunt of long-enduring love, and kindness towards the unhappy victim whom he had betrayed. It sickens my heart to repeat his words. At the foot of his confession, as though it were a mere small omission, an after-thought, he had written this:—

“I acknowledge I gave Walter Sherborne the means of destroying himself, but it was at his own request, made repeatedly. And I did not yield till after the hawker's death; then, at his entreaty, I gave him the bottle, with the small portion of its contents that was left.”

Perhaps the wretch could not die without telling this. I don't know, but I give him the benefit of the doubt.

* * * * *

When I had finished reading, Michael thanked me, and taking the paper from my hand, he left the cabin. In another minute I heard his voice on deck, and once more the sails were set, and the *Penkivel's* prow was turned again towards the Cornish coast.

As I sat looking on the still figure, so silent in its anguish, I was startled by Madeline's

suddenly throwing the shawl from her face, and rising to her feet. She was ghastly white and haggard ; her hands were wrung together, and her teeth pressed upon her lips.

“ Alice, it is a terrible wrench to the soul to find a father guilty, whom for years a child has believed innocent, and whose wrongs she has wickedly revenged,” she said in a voice which pierced my heart. “ Oh, Alice, all my life long I have thought myself more just than Him, who rules the universe. I have questioned every decree. I have rebelled against every event that has befallen me. I have dared with my own hand to attempt justice, flattering myself vainly that I was merciful, and lo ! I have committed a fearful cruelty, a frightful wrong. If I had only had faith, if I had only believed that God was good, how happy I might have been. Now, I have lost love, and peace, and honour ; and all there is left to me are the dregs of life, and the sting of a stricken conscience.”

“ No, no ! ” I cried, eagerly, “ you have a thousand blessings left to you. Do not despise the great gifts still in your hand, because a fancied wrong — a wrong which you nursed morbidly — is mercifully snatched from you at last. Surely it is better to see, than to live in blindness, even though the eyes may be opened to scenes of pain. Surely it is better to know that the prison, in which your father died, was

not, as you have so long fancied, a terrible injustice. Doubtless, in the very death he inflicted on himself, there was a secret sense of retribution, a secret hope that, in dying as Nathaniel Strangways had died, his death might expiate the crime, into which he had been betrayed by Mathew Carbis. From the moment he knew what that serpent had done, it is easy to see he resolved to die. He felt he could do no more and no less, since death seemed less dreadful than to confess his real crime, and bear its punishment. And a perverted sense of honour in him also hindered this: he would not betray the guiltier man, whose accomplice and tool he was."

"But the letter—the horrible letter he wrote to me," said Madeline; "why did he lie to the very last, and leave me such a legacy of revenge?"

"My dear, dear sister," I answered, pressing her white face softly with my lips, "I am ten years younger than you, yet I know that 'many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it;' and 'jealousy burneth like a fire for ever.' In your father's love for the proud, beautiful woman, who never loved him, and in his bitter wrath against the man—rich, noble, and young—who, as he thought, had stolen her from him, you must read the solution of that cruel letter. You must read it, Madeline, by the light of the prison lamp, as your father

wrote it—you must look round upon the heavy walls of the prison cell—you must see his bitter solitude, forsaken of all, and left to die—you must search in his soul for the despair, and anguish gnawing there like a serpent's tooth; and lastly, you must contrast all this with the picture he draws in his jealous heart, of his wife and her lover, free and happy, beneath a sunny sky, revelling in their wealth, rejoicing in their love, regardless of their sin. Read the letter again, Madeline, by these sad lights, and then forgive it."

"It is easier to pardon others than oneself," she replied, sorrowfully. "Alice, have you read this?" she said, putting her hand on the little book her mother had sent her.

"At sunrise, after the dreadful night of her death," I answered, "I opened the first page, and saw, 'For my dear and only child, Madeline Sherborne.' Then I closed it in great sorrow and trembling, and opened it no more."

"But you guess, Alice, what she tells me?"

"Yes, I imagine she gives you her solemn assurance that her intention was innocent, when she left your father's house," I answered. "It is certain that Carbis's powers of deception were very great, and doubtless she believed in him, and trusted him."

"Read it, Alice," she said, putting the book

in my hand. "I cannot; my tears would choke me."

It was a sort of pocket-book, with blank pages for a diary, and on these the unhappy Mrs. Sherborne had noted her intention to trust Carbis with her jewels, that he might sell them, and procure her a passage to America, where she meant to join a brother and sister. "And perhaps at some future day he will help Walter and little Madeline to come to me," she says; "and we may be happier in a land where life is easier." Soon after this comes the sad entry: "Left St. Eglon's Hut for ever. Found Mr. Carbis at the lonely spot agreed on. His strange disguise surprised and vexed me." Then followed her journey to Bristol; her sickness; the shuffling lies of Carbis respecting the non-arrival of the pretended ships; and, lastly, the news that her jewels had fetched too little to pay for her passage. With her distress at this, and many evidences of terror at her lonely, destitute condition, and many signs of her great weakness of body and mind after her long illness, the diary abruptly closes. When it opens again, the entries are the saddest the human heart can conceive, for they are no longer sane; and, most mournful of all, was it to perceive here and there, a glimmering of returning reason, in which her anguish, her remorse, her misery, are things known and felt, not forgotten as in her

madness. She knows then, she is kept in secret a prisoner in Whalley's house; she feels the horror and cruelty of her fate; she appeals against the sufferings laid upon her, and in her appeal, goes mad again. Another time, in reasonable words, seeming truthful—I know not if really true—she accuses Carbis of having made her a prisoner, when sane, and thus driving her to madness through imprisonment, cruel usage, and solitude. “He feared I should divulge his crime,” she said, “because my horror of him was so terrible when first I heard it, that I attempted to escape from him.” This was in some lonely place in Ireland, whither they appear first to have gone; and Carbis pursued her, brought her back, and made her a prisoner; and she complains that she has no hope in this solitude of being seen, or heard, or rescued. Thus the incoherent entries went on to the end, mingled with prayers, and thoughts of her child. Most of the diary was written with a pencil; and she tells how she had hidden this and the book successfully, during all her long captivity.

It was the saddest record of human sorrow I had ever read. And as I closed it, and gave it back to Madeline, I could think of no word of consolation, which would comfort her in the memory of such suffering, or of such a life and death as her mother's.

Madeline herself was the first to speak.

"Alice," she said, "who will lay her in the ground? Did Maurice promise he would fulfil this duty?"

"Yes," I answered. "Oh, Madeline, do not forget that it was for this he remained at Exeter. For this last kindness to your mother, he delayed the wish nearest to his heart—his desire to find you. Surely you will not marry the Duke de Briancourt?"

"No, never," she replied.

But as she spoke the look on her face frightened me, it was so haggard and desperate.

"What did the duke do for you," I asked, "that you promised so rashly to be his wife?"

She turned away from my gaze, with her cheeks ashen pale, and her eyes full of woe.

"Do not ask me, Alice," she said. "I am going to write it. I am going to write to Lady Crehylls and to Maurice. Lie down and sleep while I write."

"And you will not forget," I returned, laying my hand upon her arm, "how earnestly Mr. Pellew loves you, and how long and hopelessly he has endured the burden of this love?"

"I will never forget it," she answered. "Neither, Alice, will I ever forget that in nothing do I differ from this poor, unlearned, superstitious man, who, with wild ideas of

honour and justice, has just committed murder on the high seas."

"I will not let you call that wretch's death by such a name," I said, hotly. "Why should he lose ship and cargo merely to hang a villain with a sheriff's rope?"

But Madeline had begun to write, and as I saw her tears falling on the paper, I would not vex her with more words. I thought she would be best alone, so I went upon the deck, and glancing at the yard-arm, with a curious chill running through all my veins, I walked aft, and sat down near the helm, where Michael stood.

"Miss Alice," he said, turning his grey face towards me eagerly, "is that red light in the east the sunrise, or am I cheating myself with hope, being still blind?"

Then I rose, and straining my eyes in the direction his hand noted, I saw a crimson glow spreading and rising over the eastern sky.

"It is not the sunrise," I said, doubtfully. "It is too bright and deep a red."

As I spoke a great fierce glow shot upwards, lighting for a moment all the rigging of the *Penkivel*, and the faces of the crew.

"'Tis a ship on fire!" said Michael, in an awed and solemn tone.

The men on deck echoed his cry. Then, as the word was given, all hands crowded sail, and we

commenced that most exciting of all hazards—the race against time to save human lives. Gallantly the ship breasted the waves as we flew onwards; every mast strained with the weight of canvas it bore; every eye fixed upon the fiery glow in the heavens, growing larger and fiercer as each wave was passed; every heart throbbing high with the noble hope of bringing succour to the hopeless.

How they worked, those brave, rough men! How breathlessly they measured the shortening distance, silently straining every nerve to increase the speed of the good *Penkivel*! Michael was at the wheel. I saw him catch every point of the wind that favoured him. I saw the workings of his face as the great burning ship came distinctly into view, burning on the sky, burning in the sea, and seeming herself a flaming mass between these two huge fires. Far, far across the waves flashed the dreadful lurid light, shining now right in the path of the *Penkivel*, painting vividly on the strained eye every sail, and spar, and rope upon her creaking masts; painting, too, the watchful, earnest, and silent faces, turned anxiously towards the flames, and covering with an unwonted glow that one brave face of ashen grey, whom all eyes watched so eagerly.

A cheer—heavens, what a cheer!—rung out from the very heart of the flames, and the *Penkivel*, like an arrow, shot by the burning ship.

As I closed my eyes in terror, Michael's skilful hand upon the helm had brought his craft upon the least dangerous side, and sails were furled and boats were lowered, as though human hands were wings of angels, hastening to save the perishing. Upon the poop I saw dimly a group of figures clustered together. Sometimes visible, sometimes hidden by the smoke, they seemed rather like some ghastly dream than living beings of flesh and blood, scorching there before our shrinking eyes.

As the first of these figures sprang into the sea, I knelt down, and hid my face; but as a second and a third followed, and the boats of the *Penkivel*, darting hither and hither, gathered them up—Madeline, standing by my side, told me this—I grew brave enough to rise and watch the scene, with feelings at my heart, that no words which learned tongues have ever coined could clothe in language. Looking at Madeline, I saw her cheeks glowing, her lips trembling, her eyes lustrous with joyful tears.

"Alice," she whispered, "there is something worth living for yet upon the earth. This human love, which succours and delivers, might make an angel envy us." Then, as though speaking to herself, she murmured, "In sight of this, what are my tinsel triumphs on the stage? What is the success of pride, of vanity, of revenge, when seen in the light of one brave and

noble deed? Oh what a bitter lesson I have had to learn, before I could understand, that I have sold my life for that, 'which profited me nothing!'

I am not learned in ships and sailor phrases, so I can but relate in my own way, that the burning vessel was in flames forward, while the after deck, by the exertion doubtless of the crew, was comparatively untouched. I could see now why the people were crowded on the poop; and, amid the smoke and glare, I could see also one young figure standing between the fire and the crowd, keeping the flames back on this debatable ground, by daring exertions, and endurance wonderful to all. With eyes filled with tears, I grasped Madeline by the hand.

"He is like Tom," I whispered. "Tom would have done just such a deed as this."

"True," she answered. And now having fancied he was like Tom, I watched this brave young figure with double interest; and at each new exertion of daring, of skill, of courage, I clapped my hands for joy, and cheered him like a maniac. It was very curious how glad I was to see his bravery, and yet with what breathless fear I watched his danger. Very curious, too, my pride in seeing him linger the last on board, not leaving the ship till every man was gone, and working till the latest minute in throwing water over the great wetted sail, hanging over the

black and smoking side, which had protected the women and children as they were lowered to the boats.

"He is the last, the very last on board!" I cried to Madeline. "See, he will not go till that old man is safe. I said he was like Tom."

As I spoke a burst of flame, a black mass of smoke, hid the very ship herself from our eyes, and I knew not if he were saved or no. Then a cheer reached us through the rolling clouds, and a great weight was lifted from my heart.

"Surely that is the welcome the boat's crew have given to my hero," I said. "It would be hard indeed to see the bravest die."

A few breathless minutes more, and the *Penkivel's* boats shot out from the smoke, and the great red shadow on the sea, and were here besides us, with the weary, pallid faces of the rescued, looking thankfully up at their ark of refuge. "Only one life lost," I heard a voice say from the boats.

It was strange again how my heart sank at these words, fearing who this one might be; but in another instant the gallant young figure, whose shadow had passed in momentary terror and sorrow through my thoughts, was standing safe upon the deck. I drew back on seeing him; but Madeline came forward and addressed him. "How many are there saved?" she asked.

"Twenty-three, madam; twenty-three lives

saved through the kind Providence which sent this ship to our succour," he replied.

"And had you no boats?" asked Madeline again.

"Madam," said he, "our boats quitted us two hours ago, so overladen with their human freight, that I am sadly anxious for their safety. On the departure of the last boat lots were drawn, and those to whom the fortune fell, left in her. With two or three exceptions," he added.

"And who were those?" asked Madeline.

"Two women with their children preferred to remain with their husbands, and—and myself," he said, smilingly. "The truth is," he continued, "these people are nearly all poor German emigrants, and, as I speak German, I was able to be of use to them, and keep them cheerful and hopeful."

"He is more than ever like Tom," I said to myself.

"May I ask your name?" said Madeline, holding out her hand to him.

"Charles Trafford," he answered, lifting his cap with a scorched hand, "or usually Charlie, to my friends."

"Charlie to me then always!" I exclaimed, crying like a simpleton, and in my foolishness even seizing his hand in both mine. Then, with my face red to the very roots of my hair, I ran back and hid my insignificant little figure behind

Madeline's stately form. But she drew me forward again, putting her arm around me ; and looking up, I saw her face like snow, and her lips shaking.

"Charles Trafford?" she said. "What Trafford? Where from?"

"From Baltimore now," answered the young man ; "but originally from Shropshire, in Old England. I am the son of Charles Garth Trafford, who emigrated to America when only a lad of sixteen."

"Alice, this is my cousin," said Madeline, speaking brokenly, with tears ; "this is my mother's brother's son. Charles Trafford, this is Alice Rathline, my most dear sister ; I am her brother's widow."

I will not speak of all the amazement and joy that followed, because even in the midst of it I thought I saw a shadow on Mr. Trafford's face.

"Rathline? Did you say your sister's name was Rathline?" he said ; and I fancied he looked at me pitifully, but just then a German voice called to him, and he hurried forward to help the poor emigrants. When he quitted us, Michael Polgrain crossed the deck, and with his grey face lighted up with strange enthusiasm, he grasped my arm, and pointed upwards.

"I know it is broad day, Miss Alice," said he, "although the light is still dull and grey to me,

for I perceive it is not God's will that I should ever see the sun again : but the darkness and the night are lifted off my heart, and I am happy. Miss Sherborne" — he always called Madeline by this name—"did not the vision say there was a wheel set in the midst of a wheel? I ran the *Penkivel* out to sea that a murderer might die, and thereby I have saved the lives of twenty-three human beings, who must have perished by a terrible death, if the unseen hand upon the helm had not brought my ship to their rescue. Yesterday, before you came on board, I purposed taking the *Penkivel* in the night to a certain spot to unload her cargo ; but my purpose was like chaff before the wind when the great wheels bore down upon me, and I was driven out to sea, and constrained to steer in the course of the burning ship. Never forget, when you think of me with blame, that if Mathew Carbis had not died, twenty-three better lives would have gone down into the deep. That thought comforts me, though the sky is dark still. Miss Alice," he said, and his voice trembled with inexpressible pathos, "when the sun rose, and the blessed rays struck dull and leaden on my dimmed eyes, I trembled. I feared the judgment of blindness rested on me still for sin committed. But looking at these twenty-three, plucked like brands from the burning, I thought, since God had chosen me for an instrument for good, that I

could not have gone against His laws in what I have done, though the deed is outside of human laws. I never had a misgiving till I saw him, Carbis, dead ; then I felt it cruel that I should have been so eager to take the life from that poor, cold, helpless flesh which had once been a man."

He looked at me wistfully, as though he needed comfort ; but I knew not what to say. Madeline, too, bowed her head to him in silence. She would neither justify nor condemn his deed. Perhaps in her secret heart she felt he was less guilty than herself, and she dared not utter either words of rebuke or of consolation.

"When I saw him dead," continued Michael, "I thought perhaps it was an evil thing to kill him, and not give him time."

"Time !" I interposed. "He had twenty-two years of time ; don't torment your conscience on that plea."

Michael caught at my words eagerly.

"You are right," he said ; "and doubtless it was ordained he should die on board the *Penkivel*, in sight of those whom he had wronged the most. And I, why should I complain if my hands have been made to do justice? We cannot understand all things. Evil may come out from the Throne as well as good. A spirit was sent out once from the Lord to be a lying spirit on the lips of the prophet, to lead a wicked king to his

doom. I am only a child, and, as a child, I hold on to Faith. The fiery wheels of Time and Chance may crush me, but I will never forget the Spirit is with them, and there is a wheel set in the midst of a wheel, and underneath the wings is the form of a man's hand."

He lifted his cap reverently, and went forward to speak to Mr. Trafford, who came to meet him.

"These poor creatures entreat you to take them into a French port," he said. "We are not far from the coast of Brittany. Can you land them there? Living is very cheap in that country; and, almost penniless as they are, this is a great consideration. I will take care that our next outward-bound ship calls for them at whatever port you land them. I am agent for the American firm, to whom these emigrant ships belong."

"I will take them to the nearest port," said Michael, "whatever its name may be; and though they have lost everything, perhaps I shall find a way to help them before they land."

Soon after this I saw him speak to each of the crew separately, and lastly he gathered them all together at the stern, close by the man at the helm.

"Soas," he said, in a low, earnest tone, "there is a sum of money on board this ship, which was left to you by a bad man, in the hope that it

would bribe you to give him his wretched life. Am I right, soas, in saying that you, ‘one and all,’ refuse to touch this money?”

“One and all!” answered the men.

“And, comrades,” continued Michael, “am I right again in saying that you, one and all, wish this gold to be given to those poor foreigners, who have lost their all in the sea, and whom you have this past night saved from two deaths—fire and water?”

“One and all” cried the men. “We wish it. One and all.”

Never did the good old Cornish motto ring out so sweetly in my ears, as it did now in these kindly voices.

Mr. Trafford undertook the division of the money, and as I saw the tears, and thankfulness, and joy it brought on haggard faces, I marvelled at the mercy which, from the evil gains of such a man as Mathew Carbis, had wrought a blessing.

I suppose I was very tired, for as I stood looking at this scene, and Mr. Trafford had glanced at me once or twice, always with that look of pity on his face, I fell down suddenly, weeping, as it were, for very weariness.

I think Mr. Trafford carried me to the cabin; but it was Madeline who took me gently in her arms, and laid me on the bed. Then, kneeling down by my side, she prayed me to sleep; and to

soothe my vexed spirit, over weary and excited, she sang softly a simple hymn that my mother and dear Tom used to love. Ah, sometimes now in dreams, I fancy I hear still the soft murmur of her glorious voice, and I feel again the pressure of her arms, and the warm touch of her tears as they fell upon my cheek. Oh, Madeline! Madeline! it was cruel to bid me farewell for ever, thus in silence.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION OF ALICE RATHLINE'S NARRATIVE.

 I SLEPT for eight hours without awaking. Mine was the deep, healthy sleep of eighteen; not the light slumber of later years, which a slight sound will banish. Moreover, my ear now had grown accustomed to the noises of the ship; and, exhausted as I was, a little extra confusion was not likely to arouse me. It was night again when I awoke and found myself alone. A lamp was burning in the cabin, and on the table, beneath it, lay a letter. Starting up somewhat frightened, I called hastily, "Madeline! Madeline!" but there was no answer.

"She is gone on deck," I said; but my heart misgave me; and looking at the letter, I saw it was addressed to myself. I tore it open hurriedly. Within were two letters—one for Maurice, the other for Lady Crehylls. On the outside sheet which enclosed them were a few lines of farewell to me.

I stood a moment like one stunned, then I rushed on deck. I caught sight of Mr. Trafford instantly, and ran towards him.

"Where is Madeline?" I cried.

"She has landed with the emigrants," he answered. "No persuasion of mine would induce her to alter her resolve."

"How long ago did she land?" I asked. "Cannot I land also? Is it too late?"

In my distress I wrung my hands together, and spoke with passionate eagerness.

"It is more than three hours ago since we put the Germans and my cousin ashore," replied Mr. Trafford; "and she entreated me to assure you she was safe and well, and amply provided with funds. She would write to you when you return to London, and give directions then respecting everything."

I could not keep back my tears.

"It was cruel to steal away while I slept," I said, bitterly. "Oh! why did no one awake me?"

"Believe me," returned Mr. Trafford, "it was not cruel. My cousin has told me all her sad story, and I perceive she is too proud to forgive herself for the past. Neither can she persuade herself to see her friends till some expiation, some atonement has been made for the wrongs done so rashly. Moreover, believe me, the Duke de Briancourt is a dangerous man, and Madeline

does well to avoid him for the present, and escape him altogether in the future, if she can."

This last reason pacified me a little, and I began to hope all would yet be well.

"When shall we be back at St. Eglon's?" I said, wearily.

"Not for some hours, I fear," replied Mr. Trafford. "You see the wind now is light and variable, falling sometimes to a dead calm, so we tack continually and make but little way."

Ignorant as I was of tides and winds, I saw this; and so, with a sigh, strove to gather patience. Here Michael came up and joined us.

"It was a strange thing," said he, "how the wind favoured us when we sailed out of St. Eglon's bay, and veered round and favoured us again when we went right in the track of the burning ship; but now that the work is done, the wind has dropped. Miss Alice," he added, "there is supper set for you in the cabin."

I thanked him, and went below again. Now Madeline had left me, and I was alone on board the *Penkivel*, I felt happier in the cabin than on deck. But when the morning broke, full of sunshine and beauty, Mr. Trafford persuaded me to change my resolve to remain there, and to come on deck again; and as the *Penkivel* beat about under the light winds, I confess, in spite of my loneliness and the strangeness of my position, I spent one of the happiest days of my life. When

night fell clear and calm, the wind being fair for us again, the Cornish coast was visible like a ridge of grey clouds upon the sky.

* * * * *

“Do you see those two lights burning upon that hill?” said Michael. “Those mean danger for us at St. Eglon’s. I fear, Miss Alice, I shall not be able to take you back to the Hut. I must beat about Mount’s Bay till a friend comes out to us and brings us tidings ; but a boat can take you ashore, if you are not afraid to go, and then you can travel on to St. Eglon’s by land.”

I was forced to agree to this, and I even said I was not afraid ; but in my heart I felt terrified at my loneliness, and at the thought of taking this journey unaided and alone.

As I was putting on my cloak in the cabin, Michael came in and held out his hand to say good-bye. There was a strange gloom on his grey face.

“I may never see you again, though I hope to, Miss Alice,” he said. “I am bound now to go to Penkivel to see Lady Crehylls ; and I shall be to her as one of those messengers whose feet upon the mountain bring good tidings.”

Here his dim eyes fell wistfully on the Great Book on the cabin table. It still lay open at the vision of Ezekiel.

“Is there no word, no token there for me,

Miss Alice?" he said. "My soul is full of doubts and terrors. A word would comfort me."

Then he turned a leaf or two hurriedly, and laid his finger on a verse.

"Will you read this to me?" he said.

Knowing his great superstition, I read the words he indicated with much reluctance: "And thou shalt be no more; though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again."

"Those are hard words," said Michael. "But what then?—if they are His will I can bear them, though their meaning now is dark to me and full of terror."

"But it is an error, a superstition," I cried, to take a single verse thus, and fancy it bears a special and fateful message. You should read a chapter, Michael."

He smiled and closed the book.

"You forget I am no scholar, miss," he said; "so it has always been my way to choose a verse like this, and bear the few words of it in my mind, as though it was a message sent right into my soul,—sent to me direct, like a letter is sent, or as a word of warning comes from a friend. You see those two fires on the hill, Miss Alice? To most eyes they are only a few weeds burning—a little furze or griglans (heath); but I know them to be a message to me, and if I do not heed it I shall run into danger and sorrow. In the same way, though these words might be spoken against

some wicked city of old, yet I must take them to myself, else they will be as meaningless fires, not a beacon of warning."

"The boat is ready!" cried Martin.

And now I would have wished Mr. Trafford good-bye; but, to my great surprise, he said, quietly, "I am going with you, Miss Rathline. My cousin placed you in my charge, and, with your permission, I will travel with you, and see you safely to your home."

"I have no home, now Madeline has forsaken me," I answered, a little bitterly.

"But you will let me take you to your sister's house in London," he said. "I shall be grieved indeed if you will not permit me to fulfil the trust, which Madeline has put in my hands."

"But am I not taking you away from some more urgent business, some greater charge?" I said.

"No,—you are my sole charge," he replied. "You cannot think how great, how heartfelt a pleasure it is to an American to meet with a relative in England. Think, then, how this pleasure was increased by the circumstances under which Madeline and I have met, and then you will understand how eager I am to obey her behest."

I recollected how beautiful Madeline was, and I no longer wondered that for her sake, her gallant cousin was willing to take care of an insignificant little thing like me.

"I am very much obliged to you," I stammered, my face getting uncomfortably red as I spoke. "I am afraid you will have a troublesome charge, for I must go first in quest of Mr. Pellew, and deliver to him these letters."

Without further words we departed, bidding adieu for ever to the good ship *Penkivel*. As for our journey to St. Eglon's, I need not relate it, since this is not my own story I am telling, but Madeline's.

At the Hut I found only Grace Chagwynne, who told me that, on seeing the *Penkivel* set sail, the Duke de Briancourt's rage and astonishment broke out in furious words. He believed that Madeline and I were forcibly detained by the smugglers, and he lodged an information against them with the authorities; therefore there was a keen watch set for the *Penkivel* all up and down the coast.

"But our folks are watching too, I reckon," said Grace; "and the King of Prussia isn't a man to lose either boat or cargo."

"The King of Prussia!" I cried. "What has he to do with the *Penkivel*?"

Grace coloured, and then explained that the chief smuggler in the West, who found money for these ventures, was a man who bore such a resemblance to his Majesty of Prussia, that he generally went by his name, which was a safer one, perhaps, to use than his own. I scarcely

heeded her, being so anxious to apeak of other things.

"Has Mr. Pellew been here? and where is my brother?"

As I asked these questions Mr. Pellew himself entered the Hut. He was very pale and agitated, and seized me by the hand hurriedly, crying, "Where is Madeline?" Surely she is with you."

Pitying his great sorrow, I gave him the letters without a word, and then beckoning to Mr. Trafford, I stole away and left him alone to read them. In the garden Grace assured me my brother was safe in Mr. Pellew's hands, the duke having left him at the Hut, when he departed in fury to set a hue and cry on the *Penkivel*.

When Mr. Pellew rejoined us, I was not surprised to see traces of his great emotion still visible in all his aspect. The history Madeline had given him of the death of Carbis would agitate him, even if his anxiety respecting herself were not a deeper cause for dismay. He and Mr. Trafford paced the garden for some little time, conversing eagerly together, then Mr. Pellew drew near to me.

"Alice," said he, "I am obliged to ask you to remain with Grace Chagwynne for a day or two, and during that short time I trust you will be content with knowing your brother is safe

and well, without wishing to see him. At the end of that time I will take you to him. Meanwhile I shall bear Madeline's letter to Lady Crehylls; and I must also, at all risks, board the *Penkivel*, and see Michael Polgrain. The Duke de Briancourt is on board the Revenue cutter now cruising in search of her, and you know he is a dangerous adversary for our friends the smugglers."

"Then save them if you can," I replied. "Of course I will stay with Grace until your return. And what will Mr. Trafford do?"

"I will remain true to my charge," he returned. "I shall find lodgings in one of the cottages near by, I have no doubt; for I shall not consider myself absolved from my promise to my cousin, until I see you safe in her house in London."

What a marvellous influence Madeline possesses! I thought, a little sadly, for I felt sorry that young Mr. Trafford should be added to the list of those who loved her hopelessly. Thus thinking, I thanked him quietly for his kindness to myself, and then I turned away, and wished Maurice Pellew good speed on his journey.

* * * * *

"Here is Lord Crehylls!" said Grace, in a frightened tone.

Looking up I saw a pale, thin gentleman alighting from a carriage which stood among the trees near the cottage, for I did not stay at St.

Eglon's Hut, but at Grace's own house. As he approached, he bowed to me, saying, "Miss Rathline, I believe?" Then he added, hurriedly, "Will you oblige me by accompanying me to the Castle? Mr. Pellew awaits you there. And will your friend come also?"

This he said on Mr. Trafford's making his appearance very suddenly from the little orchard, where, with his irrepressible propensity for making himself useful, he had been gathering in Grace's winter apples.

We drove very silently to the great castle of which I had heard so much, and in the hall we were met by Mr. Pellew, who took me by the hand, and led me into a magnificent room overlooking the park.

"Alice," he said, "at Penkivel you were made the unconscious means of deceiving Lady Crehylls; you told her that her child was drowned, and that your father's letter was a cheat. Here at Crehylls, I wish you to undeceive her. Now tell her, who are these?"

He threw open a door leading into the next room, and there I saw standing, hand in hand, my brother Alfred and a pale, pretty boy, whom for a moment I did not recognise. Then, as my face grew very white, I saw he was Aubrey Crehylls, and I could not repress the loud cry of fear which rose to my lips. As I foolishly uttered this shriek of surprise and alarm, Lady

Crehylls entered the room, leading a little girl by the hand, who no sooner caught sight of the two boys, than she sprang towards Aubrey, and cast her arms about his neck.

“I knew you would keep your promise,” she cried,—“I knew you would come again. Aunt Agatha, this is Alfred Singleton. This is the little boy whom you saw in the churchyard of Penkivel, and to whom you promised always—always to be a friend.”

The little creature could say no more, for the tears of joy and the trembling of her lips, which stopped her voice. As for Lady Crehylls, she was so pale that she seemed scarcely living, and her eyes were cast on me with a look of fear and anguish so imploring, that a thrill of sympathetic pain ran through my very heart at seeing her.

“Alice,” said Mr. Pellew, “you perceive there are two Alfred Singletons; tell Lady Crehylls which of these really bears that name, and where, and under what name you have seen this child.”

With his eyes following me still, I went forward and put my head on Alfred’s shoulder.

“This is my brother,” I said, “and this child, his companion, is Aubrey Crehylls. By what miracle he is here alive I know not; but that he is Aubrey Crehylls I am as certain, as I am that this is the real Alfred Singleton.”

As I finished speaking Lady Crehylls fell on her knees, with her arms cast about her child, and her passionate tears of joy falling like rain upon his face.

"I know you would not deceive a mother," she said, in piteous accents, holding one trembling hand towards me. "And this is indeed my son, my only son Aubrey! But tell me so again and again. Oh, my heart is hungering and thirsting for a thousand voices to cry aloud, This is your child! your son! 'who was lost, and is found'—your son, 'who was dead, and is alive again.'"

As she broke forth thus into the words of joy in Holy Writ, she held the boy to her heart, and gazed on his face with a look of love and happiness pure as the angels wear in Heaven. As for me, I was crying with all my heart in my tears, when Mr. Pellew spoke to me again.

"Let us leave them, Alice," he whispered. "By and by, when she is calmer, you shall tell Lady Crehylls how often you saw her boy at Naples with his father. You will have much to say, but she can scarcely bear it now."

Seeing this was best, we left the happy mother with her child, and Mr. Pellew, Alfred, and I withdrew to the next room; and here, without knowing how it happened, my eyes being too blinded to see much, I found myself suddenly alone with Mr. Trafford.

"Miss Rathline," he said, "you look very happy, and I am glad to see your smiles and tears so blended; but in your joy you must not forget this is a mixed world,—part good and part evil,—and there is scarcely a single pleasure without alloy."

"Is Charles Trafford among the preachers?" I asked, half-laughing, half-crying. "But you may say what you will, for my brain is too mystified and bewildered to understand the very plainest words."

To my surprise, Mr. Trafford did not respond to my foolish speech merrily. With a calm, grave face, he crossed the spacious room and stood by me, with his hand resting on my chair.

"While I was so far from you I could not speak," he said, earnestly; "but now I think I shall have more courage."

Surprised at his voice and manner, I rose, and gazed into his face with an anxious scrutiny, and meeting in his eyes that look of pity which I remembered, I grew frightened, and began to tremble very much. Then I felt his arm around me, drawing me kindly towards his broad breast, where I leant soothed, and yet knowing that he had taken me to this shelter because he had sorrowful tidings to tell.

"Alice, we have known each other but a short while," he said, "and yet the circumstances under which we met, and the days we have spent together, make it long. In a great city, we

might have been acquainted for years, and yet not have been so many hours in each other's society, as we have now. I remind you of this because I have dared to ask for the privilege of a friend. I have taken out of Mr. Pellew's hands the sad task of telling you evil tidings."

"Go on, go on!" I cried, as I clung to his sustaining arm. "Do not keep me in suspense."

"Alice, when I came on board the *Penkivel*, yours was the first face I saw, and it seemed to me like the face of my guardian angel, for you had just saved me from a dreadful death. A moment afterwards, Madeline told me your name, and then I felt grieved, for I fancied I should always appear to you like a messenger of ill-tidings, and I held my peace. I could not forget your words. 'Charlie to me always,' you said; and I was afraid your friendship for me would die out instantly if you knew the truth—you would think I might have saved him, and yet did not."

"No, no," I answered; "whatever it is you have to tell me, I know your duty throughout was nobly done. Speak, speak at once!"

But still he hesitated, and when he spoke his voice quivered strangely.

"Dear Alice, if in the midst of the terrible danger and horror all around me, I heard two voices crying for help, one a woman's—the mother of little children, a tender, loving woman,

the other a man's, a selfish man,—for I must speak the truth, Alice,—say, would you hate me, if, knowing I could not save both, I sprang to the woman's help, and held her up in the sea till the boat came; and then, turning to aid the other, I found he had sunk for ever? Alice, do you hate me for this?"

"No, no! Charlie to me still—Charlie to me always!" I cried, as I hid my sobbing face on his shoulder.

"When I reached the *Penkivel*," he continued, holding me tightly to his heart, "you heard me say there was one life lost."

"Yes, yes, I heard you say it."

"Dearest Alice, that life was Richard Rathline's."

I trust I may be forgiven for the tempered sorrow I felt, for as this grief touched me, it came mingled with the joy of love's first kiss.

CHAPTER XI.

O one regretted Mr. Rathline's fate except his daughter Alice. Maurice Pellew's feelings were inexpressibly bitter against him. For years he had made Madeline his dupe. Knowing that the whole fabric of wrong, and of injustice, which surrounded her life and blighted it, had no existence in reality; knowing that Mathew Carbis lived, and Walter Sherborne was not guiltless, he had yet meanly taken advantage of the canker in this proud woman's heart to tempt her into an act, by which he should insure to himself the ease, and luxury he loved. All the powers of his small soul were concentrated on this one problem,—how to keep Richard Rathline comfortable. While his wife lived this was, comparatively speaking, easy; for her weakness, and Tom Singleton's affection for his mother, were mines of wealth to him, properly worked. But when Mrs. Rathline died, it became necessary to seek for another victim, and this victim he found in Madeline. Meeting with her at Naples,

he fixed on her instantly with all the keenness of a vulture, whose instincts are unerring. These also enabled him to perceive that Madeline was a nobler and a surer prey than Lord Crehylls; therefore he dropped his original intention of selling the truth to him, and chose in preference to strengthen her in her belief in the falsehoods which embittered her life.

“If I divulge the true state of the case to my lord,” he argued, “I should certainly get a good sum down, which I should as certainly spend. And where would Richard Rathline be then? In a bad way, I fear; for the shadow of Mathew’s crime, which I have concealed so long, would hang about me, and Madeline and Tom would hold me in horror. No chance of untying their purse-strings then; whereas, if I keep a quiet tongue, and use my advantages as I ought, Madeline will be a good income to me. Then, too, it is not so very pleasant to hang one’s cousin for the sake of a little money; I would rather take care of myself in a more agreeable way, and have the satisfaction besides of a clear conscience.”

Thus argued Mr. Richard Rathline; and intimately acquainted as he was with Madeline’s history, it was not difficult for him to gain her confidence by judicious sympathy, by a simulated intense belief in her father’s innocence, and by fervent expressions of indignation against the

cruel, selfish injustice by which he had been sacrificed. All this, of course, he said, in the full knowledge that he lied ; but, so it served his purpose, a falsehood was sweeter to Richard Rathline than the truth.

Seeing how eagerly Madeline listened to any voice that sympathized with her father's woe, and with the rankling sense of the injustice done to him and to herself, which shadowed and darkened her own mind, it was not perhaps wonderful that this man, vile as he was, could nevertheless always gain her ear. It was a relief at times to speak to some one who, as she thought, knew the truth ; for Mr. Rathline did not scruple to declare that he more than suspected the guilt of Lord Crehylls, and had fathomed the selfishness of Mr. Lanyon, who sacrificed her father to save his son-in-law.

Communion with an evil man begets a familiarity with evil, which, in the end, undermines the haughtiest soul—the soul that rests not on the rock of faith, but on the pinnacle of its own pride, scorning sin and baseness for the sake of its honour. And when such a soul as this falls, it falls low indeed, because it knows that it hath fallen. The fierce sense of wrong that rankled in Madeline's heart, and the agony of impatience with which she bore it, were the stumbling-blocks on which she fell.

"The earth was full of violence," she said.

"Might everywhere subdued right; the poor, the weak, the sorrowful, were crushed, as her father had been, beneath the hand of wealth and power; and justice was either a mockery or a myth. Blind chance and circumstance rolled onwards, beating down the miserable in their march, and raising, as they ever did, the rich and the noble; and the battle was ever to the strong, and the race ever to the swift; and there was no ruler, and no guide to judge the cause of the poor upon the earth. So, seeing there was no one to execute judgment, she would herself stand in the breach, and fight for justice with her own hand; and if ever the sword were put into her grasp, she would not fear to use it, even if she pierced her own soul."

Thus she ripened her heart for the sin into which it rushed.

* * * * *

On the day that Tom Singleton so generously lost his life, the Duke de Briancourt was out in the bay cruising in his little sailing yacht, and witnessing the accident, he bore down instantly on the scene of the disaster. He found Mr. Rathline sitting helplessly in his boat, gazing on his step-son, who, having already saved the little Alfred, was now struggling hard to rescue the child Aubrey. As he swam towards the boat, he was seized by the drowning servant, and while striving vainly to extricate himself from his

death grasp, the duke sprang to his assistance, and took the boy from his failing arms. Encumbered by the child, Tom Singleton had found it impossible to give help to the poor wretch who clung to him, and now, exhausted and fainting, he sank with him, and both were drowned.

Mr. Rathline was not a man of nerve; he fell down in the bottom of his boat quite sick and faint as he saw this sight, and it was not until he was dragged on board the yacht that he recovered himself.

"My surgeon has succeeded in restoring one child to life," said the duke, "but the other he declares is dead."

Mr. Rathline rushed into the cabin, and perceived it was the little Aubrey who breathed, while his own son still lay lifeless.

"I am quite ruined!" he cried, aghast. "If that boy lived, he would be a fortune to me now Tom is dead."

Tom Singleton had made no secret of the terms of his will, therefore his step-father was perfectly aware, that his son Alfred would now be in possession of considerable wealth, if he were only alive to inherit it. His disappointment vented itself in tears, which certainly fell more for the loss of the money, than the loss of his child. Then there darted into his scheming brain, the daring plan of substituting one child for the other, and making Madeline a party to

the fraud. He broached the idea to the duke, who seized upon it instantly. He had bought Mr. Rathline long ago, body and soul, and purchased from him all Madeline's history, such as she knew it herself. The secret of Mathew Carbis's existence Rathline of course kept to himself; his wretched cousin was one of his settled sources of income, and he was not a man to destroy a nest-egg unless obliged. Now the knowledge thus gained from Mr. Rathline gave the duke the clue to Madeline's character for which he had long yearned. And he perceived at once the advantage he should gain by possessing a secret, which she would have to share with him, and which would give him an immense power over her fate.

"It shall be done," he said, resolutely, to Mr. Rathline; "only, you perceive, to carry it out with safety, the body of the other child must be lost in the sea, and never recovered."

For a moment Rathline trembled and hesitated; the thought of consigning his child to the waves staggered even him, but his scruples did not last long.

"What does it matter?" he said, shrugging his shoulders; "the sea is as good a burying-place as the land."

"You consent!" cried the duke. "Now hurry ashore, and bear the news first to Lord Crehylls that his son is drowned; then let your

daughter-in-law know that she is a widow. But take care not to tell her that I was by when her husband died, else she will believe that I might have saved him, and would not."

"But your people in the yacht," said Rathline; "wont they betray the truth?"

"My people are mine," replied the duke, smiling, "body and soul; besides, is it not easy to tell them that the dead child is young Crehylls?"

"And the other affair?" continued Rathline, uneasily; "you'll do it decently, I hope?"

"With bell, and book, and candle, if you like," said the duke. "Psha! don't be weak."

"The boy is really dead, I suppose?" said Rathline, still anxious.

As if to answer him, the duke's surgeon came out from the cabin.

"It is all in vain," he said, in French; "the child is gone, and the life of the other is but flickering."

"You hear?" observed the duke. "Go on your errand at once. I promise you I wont throw a living boy overboard."

Mr. Rathline departed gloomily, the two men who rowed him ashore landing him, and returning instantly to the yacht, in obedience to their master's commands.

No sooner had the boat departed than the duke entered the cabin, and laid his hand on the surgeon's shoulder.

"Recover the child," he said, in his own tongue, "and count me your debtor for that sum, which you told me yesterday you had such dire need of."

Thus incited, the energy and patience of the surgeon, which had drooped, revived, and after hours of persevering effort, Alfred Singleton breathed again.

The duke sailed away in his yacht, and placed the boy in safe hands before he again saw Mr. Rathline, from whom, of course, he concealed the fact that his son lived. With such a secret in his possession he held an immense advantage over his accomplice, which he knew how to turn to his own profit.

Aubrey Crehylls was a delicate child, and he lay long in a state of weakness and exhaustion, which for weeks rendered his life doubtful. The strangeness of the scene, and of the people around him helped to bewilder his young mind, so that when he woke from the delirium of the fever which oppressed him, it was a less difficult task than might be imagined to impress new beliefs on his brain. At five years of age children have scarcely a past. Yet some dim memories still floated in his mind, and to dispel these he was taken to the duke's house in London, and told that he had once been a visitor there. As for Alfred, no attempt was ever made to deceive him regarding his own identity. He

was simply taught to obey the Duke de Briancourt, that was all; and at the school where he was placed no questions were asked, and he was allowed to write no letters.

When Madeline heard of the death of the gentle, brave good man, whose love she had returned so coldly, it seemed to her another terrible injustice, against which her heart rebelled fiercely. Was it not enough that her father had died for a Crehylls, but must her husband perish also to save the life of a Crehylls? She could take no comfort from the brave and generous deed through which he died; she could not even praise it. His pure, unconscious, unselfish nature was too high for her to comprehend. His soul, humble and serene in its steadfast faith, was so much simpler and wiser than hers, that she could not follow it in the heights of its love, or the depth of its peace. She could only feel that the great stay on which she leaned, was taken from her, and henceforth she should walk alone in desolate places, where the wastes of the heart brought forth weeds, and the rue of a vain repentance. In this bitter mood, the unquenchable fire of her wrath against those, who, to keep their own soft ease, and luxury, and good name, had piled suffering on her head, rose again to her soul, to bring upon it a curse and a brand. To save Geoffrey Crehylls, the assassin, her father had been slain, and Mr. Lanyon had

done this cruel deed mercilessly, to spare his daughter Agatha a pang. Now, to save the son of Geoffrey Crehylls, her husband had perished, and again the deed saved Agatha Crehylls a bitter sorrow. Was this justice, or was it the blind decree of mere Fate and Chance, to which she would not bow in resignation?

While Alice lay ill, and Madeline chafed and raged thus beneath her sorrow, the temptation came to her for which she had almost prayed. The hearth was swept, and garnished for them when the evil spirits knocked, and entered.

"I have told Lord Crehylls his son is dead," said Rathline; "so it is too late to speak the truth now, even if you wished it."

"But she does not desire it," interposed the duke. "The rash, Quixotic generosity of youth, which spared a criminal, must now give way to stern justice. Mrs. Singleton, you have no right to deprive Mr. Crehylls of the patrimony, which his brother has forfeited by his crime. You must look on the strange accident, which puts this boy in your power, as an opportunity placed in your hands to atone for your mistaken mercy. To avenge your father was a sacred trust, which you have weakly neglected."

She yielded to the voice of the tempter, and awoke to find herself the prey of the two vultures whose talons were in her very heart. For Richard Rathline she worked, she toiled, she sang; for

the Duke de Briancourt she smiled, when her spirit wept. She was obliged to accept his attention, and endure the expression of his fierce and angry love : she was compelled often to quench his jealousy and deprecate his wrath. Until she met Maurice Pellew again, she played her part bravely ; but at sight of his face, at the renewal of the old dear love, never quenched, and never forgotten, her spirit drooped. She writhed in her bondage now, and loathed the slavery to which she was sold. But there was no escape ; the duke knew too well how to hold his victim in the toils. At the very shadow of a threat from him, to divulge to Maurice the fraud to which she had lent herself, she trembled, and tore at her chain no more.

Yet, through all this, Madeline justified herself in her own sight, because, as she told herself a thousand times, her father was guiltless, and because Agatha Crehylls had separated her from her lover, and made her life what it was—a cup of bitterness mingled with gall. It was only when that terrible scene was enacted on board the *Penkivel*, and Mathew Carbis was unmasked at last, that she recognised this truth—that the cup was of her own mixing. Then the fabric of false justice which she had built up in her own defence fell prone, and in the first shock of her anguish, she only thought, like some poor wounded creature, of hiding herself in solitude to die.

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Mr. Rathline's movements on the night he quitted his daughter still remain unexplained. Believing that Madeline had gone to Penkivel to pour out a full confession to Lady Crehylls, he fancied his power over her would be at an end, and Richard Rathline's income would consequently be sadly diminished. In these circumstances he would make the best bargain he could with fate. He betook himself to a coffee-house, where he penned a letter to Carbis with this brief sentence :—

“Fly for your life! The hounds are on the scent.”

It pleased Richard Rathline to go and post this letter himself, at the great central post-office in the city. And here, he waited to see his Majesty's mails depart in all their now-forgotten glory. When the long line of coaches had vanished, with flourish of whip and flourish of horn, he walked westwards at a brisk pace.

“There is no mail again to Exeter till to-morrow night,” he said to himself. “My villain of a cousin will have a good start.”

With this thought he entered the opera-house, and went straight to the Duke de Briancourt's box.

“Do you think to see Madeline here to-night?” he said.

"I hope to hear her glorious voice, and see her queenly face in five minutes from this time," answered the duke; "she acts in the second piece."

"She has quitted London," returned Rathline, "and has escaped both you and me."

The duke's love for Madeline was the madness of his life, and as he heard this his heart almost stood still. His face was white and furious as he turned it towards his accomplice.

"Don't lie to me," he said, in a low voice of rage. "I am not a man to bear such a jest."

"As I live, it is true!" cried Rathline; "and I think I can tell you where she is gone."

"How much do you want for your information?" demanded the duke, in contemptuous unbelief.

At that instant the curtain was moved aside, and the manager, with a face of consternation, came forward to apologize for Madeline's sudden absence that evening, which he ascribed to illness. In the midst of the storm which the news raised, Richard Rathline answered the duke's question.

"I meant to take fifty for my information," he replied; "but at the door of your box I met your French friend, who told me your wife was dead, and you are free to marry. That makes my news worth a hundred," he concluded, with a smile of triumph.

The duke paid him the money, and heard that Madeline was gone to Penkivel.

Full of elation, and with more than his usual swagger in his air and gait, Mr. Rathline went on to Maurice Pellew's chambers, and sold to him the secret he had so long withheld.

Meanwhile the duke hastened that very night to pursue the despairing woman, whom his mad love had so long and vainly wearied. He judged rightly when he told himself, that hers was too proud a nature, to stoop to make a confession to her enemy. If she was gone to Penkivel, it was not to recant, but to persist in the path she had chosen. For this reason he drove to the suburb where Alfred was at school, and took the boy with him.

A few miles from Penkivel, as Madeline was returning thence wearily, she met these two, and clutched eagerly at the help that the duke offered her. The loss of the young Aubrey Crehylls, and the threat of Mr. Rathline to betray her, had broken down her strength and courage. She would bear anything, do anything, to conceal effectually and for ever the crime into which she had been led. It was better even to die, than to live disgraced and despised in the eyes of Maurice Pellew; it was better to marry the Duke de Briancourt than to let Agatha Crehylls behold her defeat, her misery, her shame. The pretence of justice upheld her no more before this

thought ; and as to the story she could tell Lord Crehylls, alas ! who would believe it now.

Thus, completely dispirited and weary of all things, having no hope, no faith, and feeling only that she was unworthy of Maurice, she listened to the Duke de Briancourt as, with all the subtlety of his powerful tongue, he unfolded his plans, and pleaded his own cause.

Had he not been always devoted to her ? he said. He had even foreseen this day ; and by superhuman efforts he had saved Alfred Singleton, that he might now confute all her enemies by bringing him forward, and showing him in triumph to all those, who dared to say the boy was Aubrey Crehylls. If Madeline would be his wife, he would fetch Alice, who of course would recognise her brother, and he would take them both to Penkivel, and so close the ears of Lady Crehylls at once and for ever to the slanders of Rathline. As for the child Aubrey, he was doubtless dead, and would never be heard of again ; and he would take Madeline to Russia, far away from the scenes and memories that distressed her.

“ I am worthy of you, and you are worthy of me,” she answered. “ If you will help me for no lighter price, here is my hand—take it. But there is only one spot in the world where such a marriage can take place. Bring your priest to

St. Eglon's Hut: it is only there I can fling down my last hold on self-respect, my last hope upon earth."

Even the gall of such words as these did not temper the Duke de Briancourt's triumph.

CHAPTER XII.

IT was Michael Polgrain's intention to restore her child to Lady Crehylls himself, but the danger in which the *Penkivel* was placed hindered the fulfilment of his design. That the boy was Aubrey Crehylls he never doubted from the moment, that his nephew Martin informed him, of the arrival of the real Alfred Singleton at St. Eglon's Hut. Therefore, while Alice slept, and the *Penkivel* neared the shores of France, he sought Madeline, and with his pale eyes fixed upon her face, he told her of his discovery of the boy in the wood of Crehylls, and his subsequent illness at Grace Chagwynne's.

"And where is the child now?" asked Madeline, in a voice full of fear and anguish.

"Safe with true friends of mine," answered Michael. "I took him for one cruise for his health's sake; then fearing that such a life as ours would do him no good, I left him ashore a fortnight ago, in good hands."

For the first time through all her agony,

Madeline burst into tears, covering her face with her hands, and weeping passionately, with an intense feeling of relief and thankfulness, which lifted from her heart some portion of its intolerable burden of remorse and shame. The child was living: he was well: he would be restored to his mother! She was permitted that rarest of human blessings, the power to repair a wrong; she was spared that worst of human woes, the agony of feeling that remorse was vain, and that an evil done was an evil for ever. The shrinking horror, which had seemed to shrivel up her very heart, relaxed its hold upon her, and her tears of repentance fell like a comforting rain upon her parched soul. She had thought of the forlorn little wanderer, the victim of her rash judgment, with a terror of mind bordering on madness; she had pictured him to herself in every shape of misery that human wretchedness can wear—living, dying, dead—and in each new suffering reproaching her for the martyrdom he bore.

“I meant justice, and not murder, either of body or of soul,” she kept crying to herself, as her unwilling thoughts went out after the child in his lonely flight. But now the suspense, the doubt, the terror weighing on her soul were flung aside, like a burden laid down, and she drew her breath again freely, if not with absolute joy. And in this spirit she confessed to Michael all those facts respecting Aubrey Crehylls, which

have been already related, with this difference : that she was still too proud to throw any of the blame on those two men, who were the actual perpetrators of the fraud. She had consented to it, aided it, thought it just ; therefore the crime was hers. While she had deemed it justice, she had upheld the deed ; now she knew it injustice, she abhorred it ; but because her views, her opinions, her very heart as it were, were changed, she would not therefore deny her sin, or lay it on the shoulders of her tempters. Truly they had digged a trap for her, into which she had fallen ; but if she had not walked in their paths, the snare might have been laid in vain.

“Neither my pride, nor my honour, nor my sense of justice,” she wrote to Maurice, “has saved me from crime ; and since pride would not hold me back from sin, false pride shall not spare me the shame and agony of confession. I have committed a fraud—I have joined in a conspiracy with Richard Rathline, and the Duke of Briancourt to deprive Lady Crehylls of her child. The boy lives, and is in the custody of Michael Polgrain, from whose hands I entreat you to take him, and restore him to his mother. In my letter to her you will find all those details and particulars, which I have not the courage to relate to you ; and when you have read this sad history, Maurice, you will understand why I dared not accept your love. A

woman, in the power of two such accomplices as Rathline and de Briancourt, was not free either to love or to be loved. And yet it was not my fear of these two men, which hindered me from putting my hand in yours ; it was the remnant of honour left to me, which told me I was no fitting wife for a good man. I could not come to you conscience-laden, and with a secret on my soul which I should never dare ask you to share ; therefore, though I loved you, or rather let me say, because I loved you, I would not be your wife. If in my blindness, when I justified myself in my own eyes, I would not do you that wrong, how much less must I dare to hope for your love now, when I know myself what I am ! Then, dear Maurice, let me say farewell. Henceforth I must live alone. But in whatsoever lands I wander, solitary, remember this always, that I bear with me my deep, and steadfast love for you. I have been as firm in my love as in my hate ; the persistence with which I held to my revenge—you see I give my so-called justice its true name now—made me hold also to the one deep, dear affection of my life. But the same rashness of judgment, the same presumption which dared weigh God's justice in my poor human balance, and find it wanting, weighed your love likewise, Maurice, and declared it light and worthless—ignorantly declared it so, not knowing how jealousy transforms a man.

Thus on that same rock—rash judgment—have I wrecked my love, my life, my happiness. Oh, Maurice! dear Maurice! it is always safe and wise to forgive; for if we knew all, we might see innocence where we deemed there was only guilt; or, having fuller insight, we might look even on sin with the infinite tenderness of pity. Therefore I, who have learned this lesson too late, I, who have never forgiven any one, stretch out my arms now to you imploringly, beseeching you to forgive me all the long, long pain laid upon your life through me. Most of all, I entreat you to forgive me for being unworthy of your love; but as for me, I can never forgive myself. I carry into my exile this sting, that the wasted affection between you and me, which lies dead, might have lived, and made the desert of life, stretching now bleak before me, a garden of roses, a fragrant path filled with the blessings of peace. As I walk through the lonely and barren wilderness, whither my sin drives me, I shall think of this garden that might have been—I shall think of the pleasant paths where, hand in hand with you, I might have walked at ease, cheered by the voices of my children, as I go down into the valley of sear leaves, and shadows. Oh, Maurice! my dear and only love, I can say no more. My tears break forth, and their salt is bitter to me. I go into the sad and lonely exile, to which I condemned one more

righteous than myself, and there in the desert I shall strive, and pray, and hope, that even unto me a message of peace may come at last. Do not forget me, Maurice, or remember me too bitterly, lest, feeling your hatred from afar, I sink into despair and die. If there be any sorrow yet to come, any grief yet to be heaped upon my over-burdened heart, it lies in this word—Farewell.”

Madeline’s letter to Lady Crehylls was even more contrite, more passionately humble than the one she penned to Maurice, but it was never seen or read by any but herself.

“Will this letter be necessary to prove my boy’s identity?” asked Lady Crehylls of Maurice.

“I hope not,” he answered, in a bitter tone.

She glanced at him pitifully. “It shall not,” she said, generously. And tearing the letter in pieces, she thrust them in the fire and watched them consume away.

“I will not owe the restoration of my son to Madeline’s misery and Madeline’s shame,” she continued, firmly. “She has caused me bitter sorrow, but I do not forget that my mistaken jealousy deprived her of your love, and made her life a waste. Our sins and our mistakes are bound up together, as the errors of all are, and therefore we must take our sorrows from each other’s hands likewise. So tell her, Maurice, that I have but one wish—to exchange forgive-

ness with her. If her father was not guiltless, neither was mine, and we have both had to bear the legacy of woe they left us. She must not blame herself too deeply in that she believed her father. I also believed mine. And if through her, my husband died in exile, I can never forget that through me and mine she also is a widow. I can never forget that she bears the name of the gentle, brave man who perished to save my child."

Lady Crehylls finished with tears, and Maurice, reading on her pale face all her eagerness to behold her son again, hurried his departure in quest of Michael. This conversation took place at Crehylls, whither Agatha had come at Maurice's request. As for him, as he departed on his journey, Madeline's letter of farewell lay cold and heavy on his heart. The miles seemed long and weary which divided him from his hope of seeing Michael, from whom he longed feverishly to hear further details of Madeline's intentions, when she quitted the *Penkivel*, to land on a strange shore. He was resolved to follow her, and save her, not only from herself, but from the relentless persecution of her mad lover, who, he felt assured, would pursue her now with a fierce and more determined passion, springing from his disappointment.

Maurice travelled as fast as four horses could take him, being resolved to out-fly the duke, who,

beneath the wings of the Revenue cutter, was in hot pursuit of the *Penkivel*.

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About two miles east of Marazion there lies a sequestered rocky cove, which still bears the name of "Prussia Cove," in remembrance of the remarkable man, and keen smuggler, whose resemblance to the king of that country had procured for him the appellation of "King of Prussia." It was he, who monopolized the smuggling trade of the West ; and the chief seat of his business was the cove in question. Curious searchers may still find the deep channels, cut in the solid rock to allow of the approach of their boats, made by those brave but illicit traders, proving that they permitted no amount of hard, and difficult work to stand in the way of the success, of their undertakings.

The "King of Prussia" was lucky in his ventures. Although his premises were visited often by the excise officers, he rarely failed to receive from one of his numerous adherents some intimation of the approaching honour ; and the result for them was ever an ignominious failure. Nevertheless, the "king's" stock was sometimes very large ; but then so also are the many smugglers' holes or caves in the neighbourhood, which at that time were so carefully concealed, and the secret of their entrances so sacredly

kept, that to search for them was a hopeless and useless task. Into these caves many a cargo, of a dark night, was carried safely; and here the kegs remained until such time as the "king" could dispose of them without fear.

It was to this rugged, keen man, whose powerful intellect, and daring bravery had veritably made him a king among his followers, that Maurice Pellew brought credentials from old Chagwynne, and other secret and sure friends of the fraternity on the coast.

"You want to go on board the *Penkivel*?" said "Prussia," fixing his dark eyes on Maurice. "Well, I won't say it can't be done, but it will be difficult. Michael, for some whim of his own, ran the schooner out to sea, and now she is come back, there is such a sharp look-out for her, that it will be hard work to pass the watchers, and get a man on board to give him warning and orders."

"Let me go," said Maurice. "I am not known, and shall therefore not be suspected by any of the men on the watch."

"The matter stands thus," returned the "king." The "*Penkivel*," warned by a signal fire, kept out to sea all yesterday and last night; but to-night, in obedience to another beacon on the hills, she has put into a certain cove, and waits for a messenger from me, to hear when and where she can land her cargo. Now, it is true

that I, and my men are pretty well known, and a boat with a known face in it is certain to be followed; but you, as a stranger, will be let pass; so if you like to be my messenger, you may board the *Penkivel*; if not, you must wait till her cargo is safe landed."

Maurice was too eager to see Michael Polgrain, not to close instantly with this offer. The old smuggler king treated him with perfect confidence; the letters he had brought him, and the information which he gave of the cutter's pursuit, being assurances of his good faith.

"So there's a furrin dook, is there, aboard the cutter?" observed his majesty. "Well, if he ventures into my cove he'll get a warm welcome."

When night fell, Maurice departed in a little fishing boat, an old man being his only companion. Here and there, like a gleam of faint moonlight, or a streak of foam on the waves, glided the white boats of the coast-guard service, bearing down upon them silently and suddenly, then darting away again. Past Newlyn and Mousehole, and further still to the west, where the huge cliffs grow and heighten, and throw their giant shadows on the sea, till the biggest giant of the coast rears his rugged head before them, and like a pigmy they stand in the face of the mighty Tol-pedn-penwith. Sailing in the blackness of his Titanic shadow, their

boat darts quickly to the left, and in a moment glides beneath the smaller rocks into smoother water, entering, by a narrow and dangerous way, a tiny cove, so sheltered and hidden by towering cliffs, that passing ships on the sea without, would rarely guess its secret. Here, like a sudden spectre, Maurice sees a tall ship, with sails half furled, and a dim light shining at her bow. There was a thin rain falling now, and a slight mist like a veil covered the water, and hung chill and vapoury upon the great cliffs. Under cover of this they glide close to the vessel, apparently unperceived, for the men upon her deck never turned their eyes towards the approaching boat, nor threw out a rope, nor uttered a cry. Michael's pale face alone was set towards them, ashen-grey and deathly in the faint moonlight, looking down into the sea steadfastly, without a smile. Then the old fisherman rowing the bow-oar slipped it out of the rowlock, and stood up on the forethwarts, ready to spring on board; and as the vessel in the mist swung round slightly, he made a grasp at her bulwarks. But his hand found nothing, and had not Maurice sprung up and caught him, he must have fallen back into the sea. As this happened, the ship, the light, the crew, and Michael's cold white face all vanished, and the boat was alone in the small bay with the darkness and the rain. Amazed, and like one in a dream, Maurice gazed

around, and peered into the soft, rolling mist, with eyes vainly striving to pierce its secrets.

"That was the *Penkivel*," he said, eagerly. "Where is she?"

In that silence, where no sound reached the ear, but the gentle fall of the soft rain upon the sea, his voice seemed harsh and unnatural, and he scarcely wondered that the old fisherman's answer was spoken in a quiet whisper.

"That was no living ship," he said, bending forward, and wiping the perspiration from his brow. "Once afore I saw a ship like that. She was alongside of our craft for miles as we comed down Channel, and we hailed her ever so many times, but got no answer. When we turned into St. Ives Bay she was so close, I saw her captain's face plainer than I see yours now; then she vanished all 't waunce. But I know'd the cap'en again when I seed un the next day."

"Where, how did you see him again?" asked Maurice, eagerly.

"I saw un lying dead upon St. Ives sands," said the old man. "His ship was wrecked in the bay, and all hands lost."

He took up the oars again, after adjusting silently the sail which had helped their course, and, going forward a few furlongs, they rounded a rocky point, and discovered an inner bay, more silent, more lonely, more secluded than the first. Here, as though hidden from all human ken, lay

the *Penkivel*, darkly visible and real, yet in all things resembling the phantom, or mirage, in the outer bay.

As the boat neared the ship, and Michael's pale face met them looking down from the bulwarks, Maurice half expected to see the vision vanish again. Knowing the superstition of the man, he bent and whispered in the old fisher's ear that perhaps it would be wise not to name to him, and to the crew, that they had met without the spectre of the *Penkivel*.

"Not to the crew," replied the old man, "will I say a word; but I am bound to tell the cap'en."

An instant more, and Maurice, with the aid of an outstretched hand, found himself on deck.

"You are welcome, Mr. Pellew," said Michael, stepping forward. "Do you bring us good news or ill?"

"I bring you orders to land your cargo to-night," returned Maurice. "I scarcely know if you reckon that good news or bad."

"Good," said Michael. "The men are weary of lying here idle."

"But you run a great risk," continued Maurice, "for the Preventive boats are out, although the cutter, beguiled by false news, is gone to the Lizard."

"And is our foreign friend on board the cutter?" asked Michael. "If so, I am afraid

false news wont beguile her long. That duke is a man not easily deceived. But with double speed we may escape him yet."

Burning to ask a thousand questions respecting Madeline, Maurice nevertheless stood quietly aloof as the "King of Prussia's" messenger, the old fisherman, repeated his master's directions to Michael. And no sooner were these given than sails were set, and the *Penkivel*, steered by her captain's hand, crept slowly on her dangerous path, through the rocky cove to the outer bay. Here she lay safely on the waves, like a great sea-bird, with white wings flapping faintly in the still night, scarcely visible by the light of the dim stars.

"The king is right," said Michael, as he relinquished the helm to his nephew; "we shall not get such a night as this again—a fair wind, steady to the point as a rock, a moonless sky, and smooth water. It would be a shame to lose such weather because the shadow of a cutter may cross our path. Mr. Pellew, I can give you ten minutes of my time, if you will come to the cabin with me."

Maurice followed him with a beating heart, but to all his eager questions Michael gave but one answer:—"Miss Sherborne went ashore at St. Malo, meaning there to help the poor Germans, who, ignorant of French, craved her assistance. Having now made to Lady Crehylls

all the atonement yet in her power, she felt her presence was not needed, and she never intended to set her feet on English ground again."

Whether she would remain at St. Malo, or shortly leave it, Michael could not say, but he thought the latter, because she seemed to be in deadly fear of the Duke de Briancourt, and would certainly remove from a place whither there was a chance of his tracing her.

"But," continued Michael, "she will surely write to you or to Miss Rathline in London, and tell you her address, and her future plans?"

Maurice doubted that; nevertheless, on this small hope he was forced to comfort himself.

"As for the young Lord Crehylls," resumed Michael, "my heart was fixed on bringing him myself to his mother; but you say my lady is at Crehylls now, and it wont be safe for me to take the *Penkivel* to that bay. It's my fault that the ship lies in danger. I took her to sea on work of my own, which it was written long ago should fall into my hands, and thereby, Miss Sherborne being with me, I have gained for the good ship a cruel enemy in this duke. It is my duty then to stand by her, I having run her into danger, so I give up the pleasure to you of restoring the child to his mother. And if you have half the joy in it, Mr. Pellew, that I should feel, you'll be well rewarded." Michael's dim eyes grew full of sudden tears, and he wiped

them away, half ashamed of his weakness. "I loved his father," he said, in apology. "I loved him too well. I hid the truth when I should have spoken it, and so, in false kindness, I brought ruin on him, and all this sorrow followed." Then he gave Maurice the name and address of the kindly farmer, in whose house the little Aubrey was safely sheltered. And scarcely was this done, when the old fisherman, with a grave face, entered the cabin, and sat down by Michael's side.

"If there's arra waun dear to 'ee aboard this craaft, Michael," he said, "I reckon you'd do well to let 'un go ashore to-night, for this ship is doomed, and aal her crew."

"I hope not, Uncle Zeke," responded Michael. "The *Penkivel* will float many a year yet, I reckon."

"I tell 'ee, Michael, she'll go down into the sea afore tha world es a week older," persisted the old man. "There was two *Penkivels* to be seen to-night, waun made of timber good and true, and waun from tha land of shadows, that shipwright's hammer never touched."

Here Maurice interposed, seeking to explain how mist, rain, and sea might combine to form a mirage, or image to the eye, of the real *Penkivel*, which was hidden from them by the cliffs. But his words fell on unheeding ears. The spirits of the men to whom he spoke, were

tuned in harmony with the wild scenery, and weird traditions among which they lived, and the wonders of nature shadowed their souls with an awe, which the denizens of cities can rarely feel.

"Maybe you are right, sir," said Michael, humbly. "I wouldn't gainsay the word of a scholar like you; but because 'tis in nature such things should be, it doesn't follow that they are not sent for tokens, and for warnings to them who can read such signs. The rainbow is common every summer, but he is blind indeed who can't read the message, which its arch prints upon the sky."

"But the bow brings a promise and an assurance to all," cried Maurice. "Oh, Michael, you are too superstitious."

"To all!" persisted Michael; "yes, I know that; but if each one does not take it home to himself, it is worth nothing. Now you tell me this shadow of my ship, which you have seen, is natural, there is nothing uncommon or wonderful in it. Well, I believe that too; for why should I, more than other men, hope to have a miracle wrought for me, to show me that the end is near. But I can take this token, natural though it may be, humbly, as a warning sent to me, and say, in trembling, God's will be done." As Michael spoke, the old fisherman grasped his hand, and wrung it with sudden fervour.

"Wherever or whenever you pass away, Michael, you'll go like a brave man, as you have lived," said he; "but if so be you reckon this calling you follow isn't good for the soul, leave it, Michael, while there's yet time."

"Would you have me desert my ship when the shadow of her wreck is painted on the sea?" asked Michael. "I tell 'ee there never lived a thing 'pon the land or 'pon the water, that I've loved as I have the *Penkivel*; and if I thought it was for me she was doomed, that for the deed I have done she must sink in the sea, to be cleansed from the stain I have put upon her, then, like Jonah, I would pray to be cast out of her, that the rest might be spared."

"Ef you feel like that, Michael, soas," said the old man, "don't ee go with tha *Penkivel* 'pon her next run. Seemin' to me 'twould be whisht to bring a doom upon aal, which was meant aunly for thee."

These words appeared to have a great effect upon Michael's superstitious mind. "I love my ship better than my life," said he; "and sooner than be the Jonah to bring tha storm on her, I'd die ashore like a lubber; and I can't think 'tis permitted to me to die at sea like a man; for the word sent to me the other day said, I should be sought for, and never found again; and, looking for another message, I lighted on a harder one."

Here, in an awed tone, Michael repeated this verse: "When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit."

"And the message is one," he continued, solemnly, "for the words first sent follow after these. Martin showed me the chapter and verse."

"Uncle!" cried Martin's voice, "you are wanted on deck."

Maurice sprang up the ladder first, and for a moment could perceive no cause for Martin's sudden call. But bearing down upon them through the darkness, from the eastern side of Mount's Bay, was a little cloud, which seemed rising from the sea; and pointing to this, Martin whispered, ominously, "The Revenue cutter."

"Ah, I thought so," returned Michael, quietly. "That foreigner is not a man to be deceived very long by false news. We must make a run for it, my men. I think the night is dark enough for us to escape, even if the cutter had a cat at the helm."

And apparently she had; for creeping along steadily, she gradually intercepted the path of the *Penkivel* to her shelter in Prussia Cove, and cut off also her course to the Lizard, should she attempt

to flee in that direction. As with all sails set, she turned suddenly and bore down upon them, the fate of the smugglers seemed certain. Then came a flash of light, and a ball ricocheted over the waves far astern of the *Penkivel*.

"A miss is as good as a mile," said young Martin, complacently. "But they'll fire better soon."

His words were verified, for a second and a third shot flew towards the doomed *Penkivel*, striking the water close upon her bow.

"Michael, you must surrender," said Maurice, in a low voice. "You must not return the cutter's fire; it will be death to all of you, if you do."

"I wish we had a gun on board," said Michael, gloomily; "they shouldn't sink us then like kittens in a tub. Will no one fire a shot for the *Penkivel*?"

As if in answer to his cry, a sharp flash leaped from the cliff, and the report of a gun followed; and, in rapid succession came another and another, pressing the cutter hard, as with spars hanging useless she tacked and fired on her new foe.

For an instant the crew of the *Penkivel* remained breathless with amazement, then they burst into a simultaneous cry—"Hurrah for the King of Prussia! He has brought out his guns, and he'll beat the cutter as sure as there's salt in the sea!"

It was a short but sharp engagement. The old cannon which the daring smuggler had brought to the edge of the cliff were too much for the cutter, and she was fairly beaten off. The smoke which rolled over the bay added intensity to the darkness, and under cover of this, the *Penkivel* was able to give her enemy a wide berth, as, disabled and angry, the cutter crept into the harbour of Penzance.

* * * * *

The next morning, when Maurice awoke from his short slumber beneath the hospitable Prussia's roof, he might have taken the drama of the night for some strange dream, but for the too vivid memory he bore of the singular scene at which he had assisted. He knew the *Penkivel* and her daring crew were far away in safety; nevertheless he hurried down in some alarm on hearing angry voices below. On the ground outside the house he saw a group of men—three or four of the cutter's crew, the lieutenant commanding her, and the Duke de Briancourt.

Towards these the "king" strode in pretended fury.

"What do you mean, sir," he cried to the lieutenant, "by practising the cutter's guns at midnight so near my house? Are my family to have no rest? Is there no daylight to work your guns in, that you must come prowling along inshore at night, to disturb peaceable people?"

The bewildered naval officer stared at him for a moment in silence, and then, according to the fashion of the time, swore horribly, but the Duke de Briancourt laughed, and raised his hat politely to the cunning smuggler king.

"Mr. Pellew, I congratulate you on your friend," he said. "I confess that with such an enemy against us, we had small chance of success. I no longer marvel the victory was with you."

"What are you talking about?" asked the "king," with an air of puzzled ignorance. "Gentlemen, if you are come to make one of your usual visits to my premises, you had better begin your search at once."

The search was made, of course without avail, and except for the trampled ground upon the cliff's edge, there was not a single trace or mark of the night's engagement.* The cutter swinging lazily in the bay below looked less innocent by far than did the premises of the "king." When her young commander and his men had departed, irate and silent, the duke came forward and saluted Maurice again.

"Mr. Pellew," he said, "you must be aware that I have no enmity against your friends the

* The history given here of the smuggler Carter's engagement with the cutter is a fact: it is also true, that his remarkable likeness to Frederick the Great gained for him the name of King of Prussia.

smugglers, but there was a lady on board the *Penkivel*, who is my affianced wife, and I demand to know where she is. I have a right to protect her, and I will."

"I deny your right," replied Maurice, "either to molest Mrs. Singleton, or to question me."

Raising his hat slightly, Maurice passed him, and entered the house. The duke gazed after him with a look of concentrated hatred and jealousy, then he turned, and scanned the face of the smuggler king, deciding instantly that to question him would be a hopeless task.

"It matters little," he said to himself, as he turned on his heel, "whether this man or another answers me and takes my bribe. I have sworn to win this woman, and I will. Now I swear further, that this puny lover, whom she prefers to me, shall never see her face again."

* * * * *

"Martin is my sister's son," said Michael, "and I'm bound to save his life. You shall take him home to his mother, and that being off my mind, I can bear the sorrow there is to come, let it be what it may."

Maurice would not argue with a rooted superstition, so he shook Michael by the hand, and wished him a kindly good-bye without uttering a further protest against his belief in the "warning" which he fancied he had received.

"We shall meet again, I trust, Michael," he

said. "You will bring the *Penkivel* round to St. Eglon's and see Lady Crehylls, and the child who owes so much to your kindness. It is fair you should witness the happiness you have helped to make."

Michael smiled wistfully. "I will come, if I live," he said, in his quiet earnest voice. "Martin, sonny, wait for me at mother's for a week; then, if you don't see me, you may reckon that the token was true, and that I'm gone to the distant land whither we all travel, and whence none return."

"I wont hark to such whisht fancies," cried young Martin. "You'll bring the *Penkivel* round to St. Eglon's next week, uncle."

"No, my son; the *Penkivel* will go her next voyage without me," returned Michael. "Why should I bring ill-luck and death upon the ship I love? Ever since I looked down upon Mathew Carbis's dead face, and saw the sun rise next day, dull and leaden as of old, I've felt the end was near. Good-bye, soas! good-bye!"

The boat in which Maurice Pellew and Martin were going to sail to the farmer's at Mousehole, glided softly away over the smooth sea, while Michael stood upon the sands, and waved his hand to them in farewell. It was thus Maurice ever remembered him in after years, with the sun shining down brightly on the dim eyes and grave, grey face, which he never beheld again.

* * * * *

The days were short, and from various delays at the farm, it so happened that it was already dark, when Maurice with his charge rowed from Mousehole to Penzance.

“What is that strange light shining on the cliff?” asked the little Aubrey of Maurice.

It was a peculiar phosphorescent light, and his attention being directed towards it, Maurice gazed at it with some curiosity.

“That’s always to be seen of a dark night, sir,” said one of the boatmen; “but what it is, I can’t say.* We caall tha plaace ‘Gurmer’s Hole;’ but tha truth is, ’tis an ould mine; and tha ould men’s workings, so they say, are to be see’d there still.”

“What do you mean by the old men’s workings?” asked Maurice.

“The ould tanners, sir. Jews, some say they was, or Saracens—tha ancient men of ould times, sir, who knowed tin as well as we do, I reckon. Many a time in tha ould workings we come upon their pickaxes and their gads; but they crumble to pieces when we touch ’em. Thic is an ould adit, sir, where the light shines—a desolate plaace now, whisht and ghashtly; a plaace desolate long afore my day, worked by the

* The phosphorescent light here spoken of has disappeared entirely since the fall of a portion of the cliff above Gurmer’s Hole.

people of ould times when they dug for tin ; but hadn't shafts like we have now, I reckon."

His words seemed to Maurice like an echo of something lately heard ; and, almost unconsciously, he repeated to himself the verse Michael had rehearsed on board the *Penkivel*.

"Folks say aal them ould mines are haunted," continued the boatman. "Tha miners hear the ould tanners at work often and often. They call them 'Knockers' now."

"The light is gone !" said the child, suddenly, in an awed voice.

It was true, and a second afterwards the sound of a heavy fall echoed across the bay.

"There's a huge piece of the cliff fallen !" cried Martin, in excitement. "Let's row along faster. I feel whisht as a dry well."

Maurice, too, felt a curious shudder through all his frame, and he was glad when the lights of Penzance flashed on the limpid water around them.

The next day, as we have seen, Aubrey Crehylls was restored to his mother.

Martin waited a week, and many a week, at his mother's, but Michael Polgrain came no more to his old haunts, and his face was never seen again by living man. He was sought for eagerly for many a month ; then gradually the search ceased, and he was counted as dead, as "become like them that go down into the pit."

CHAPTER XIII.

IF Maurice Pellew lingered for a few days before commencing his sad search for Madeline, it was because he trusted her promised letter to Alice, addressed to her own house in London, would give him some hope, or at least some clue, by which he might discover to what refuge she had wandered in her forlorn despair. But he was disappointed: the letter, evidently written by a great effort, contained only the dry details of business. In it she formally relinquished her guardianship of Alfred to his sister, and to her new-found cousin, Charles Trafford, jointly, carefully explaining where and how his property was invested, and referring them to Mr. Brydges, kind, gentle Tom Singleton's friend, for further information and aid. All the furniture of her house in London she gave to Alice, requesting her only to keep her pictures and a few of her books for her sake. Her desk was to be given to Maurice. In it he found his old letters, worn and tear-stained, and many and many a little gift treasured up, which

he had given to her when she was a child at school. These proofs of her love, which she had cherished so long, and in such sorrowful silence, moved him to bitter tears, and he felt that, with all her faults, she was the one sole love of his life—the only human being who had seized his whole heart in youth, to hold it for ever, through care, and sorrow, and age, even unto death.

All through London, at Madeline's agent's, and banker's, and lawyer's, he searched vainly for news of her. Only at the banker's he heard they had remitted to her, at St. Malo, all the money they held of hers. Thither he proceeded, and found the Duke de Briancourt.

"*A la bonne heure*," said the duke, speaking French naturally on French soil. "You and I, Mr. Pellew, are apparently on the same quest. But on your part it is useless, for when a woman makes a promise to me she keeps it," he concluded, with fierce emphasis.

"She shall never keep a promise wrung from her so cruelly," retorted Maurice, with indignation. "She is fleeing now from you, and for fear of you. For years you have pursued her relentlessly, surrounding her as with a web. And lastly, when she was driven to desperation, through the snare which you had set for her, you step in with your false help, which you sell to her at a price which she shall never, never pay, while I have an arm to defend her."

“ We shall see,” said the duke, with his face pale as death.

With this they parted ; but at Paris, at Vienna, and at Rome they met again, with words growing ever fiercer, till at length, in a mad moment, Maurice accepted the duke’s challenge — for duelling was then the fashion of the day—and fell wounded seriously. A long time intervened before he was able again to travel, and then he was forced to return to England to recruit his shattered health.

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In one of the unhealthy cities on the coast of South America, a woman, unknown, obscure, and friendless, had made herself remarkable during a year by her great charity ;—not the charity which gives money, but the greater, nobler charity, which spends health, energy, and time in the cause of the poor—the charity which endures and shrinks not—the charity which suffers and is kind, not heeding ingratitude or contumely, not drawing back in fear and disgust, because poverty and sickness are ugly, and loathsome things. Her courage equalled her perseverance and her pity. No danger of infection, no squalor, no misery deterred her from giving help where help was needed. Priest and healer—the two great comforters of human weakness—grew accustomed to her soothing

presence at scenes of wretchedness and pain. She was so unassuming, so quiet and humble, and her dark dress was so uniformly plain, that it was long before her wonderful beauty attracted attention; then, while the priest marvelled - at this, and ascribed it to the loveliness of her spirit, the physician marvelled still more at the magnificent health, which kept her beauty perfect.

It was strange how peaceful, how serenely happy Madeline Singleton became, as living thus for others she learned to forget herself. All murmuring, all morbid musing and self-pity, ceased in the nobler pity which flowed out from her soul towards the sorrow, and the suffering ever close at our right hand. All her galling sense of injustice, all her anger at the mercy of the Great Judge who permits evil to exist, and for a time even to triumph, had departed from her spirit like a darkness rolled away. Yet her love of justice was great as ever, but it was tempered now by faith, which is the one perfect remedy for every sorrow. In her first deep humiliation, when she discovered that all which she had thought wrong was right, and the justice for which she had cried had been dealt to her, she sank down into despair. But from this depth she rallied quickly. If there was justice, then God was the ruler, and the directing hand was indeed hidden beneath the wings

of Chance and Time. And thus she took comfort even from the very sorrows, which had afflicted her. Since through her Lord Crehylls became an exile, and his wife was widowed, it was just, that the revolving circumstances which followed, should work out the same fate for her. Thus the "wheel set in the midst of a wheel" became to her the truest symbol of justice, as she saw how one event accomplishes another, and an evil deed punishes itself, and executes judgment eventually on the offender. To her mind, to recognise justice in the scheme of her life was to be at once content and contrite; and now, for the first time, she turned eagerly to that divine revelation of love and pity which hitherto had been to her only "as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words but they do them not." Oh, between the hearing, and the doing there yawns the great gulf of worldly covetousness, and of earthly passions.

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One day in traversing one of the quays of the hot unhealthy city, Madeline witnessed the landing of a poor musician and his family. With a talent too mediocre for Europe, they had come to this distant land as a forlorn hope, but they failed here as they had there, and they

sank into dire poverty. When two children had died of fever, and a third and fourth lay "sick even unto death," Madeline's great pity, and the wild entreaties of the poor musician, who had heard her sing to his sick child, made her break through her determination never to sing in public again. It was after a series of three concerts, which raised the poor family to comparative affluence, that a bland, civil, smiling man, an *employé* in the office of the French consul, who had passed Madeline a hundred times on her missions of charity, and never penetrated the beauty hidden beneath her hood, rubbed his hand now in silent glee, as he penned a few hasty lines to catch the European mail.

"I have heard that glorious voice at last," he wrote. "There can be but one such voice, and one such face in the world. Come at once, and you will find I have earned the fortune and the place you promised."

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In singing for the poor musician, Madeline had not fancied that her listeners would recognise in her the quiet unobtrusive visitor to the poor and the sick; but she was mistaken: she was recognised by some few with wonder, and a hundred conjectures and wild stories were rife respecting her. After this, she found in the air and manner of the priests and physicians, whom she met by

bedsides, a certain change which galled her. Curiosity was roused, her privacy was intruded on, and she resolved reluctantly to wander forth again. It was while she deliberated on this, that a letter reached her from Maurice. It came through Mr. Brydges, who remitted to her the small remnant of her income which Mr. Rathline's rapacity had left to her, and to whom alone she had entrusted the secret of her address. He apologized for disobeying her order in sending her a letter, Mr. Pellew's entreaty and evident ill-health having induced him to break her command. So once more she saw Maurice's writing, and rained down heavy tears upon his words of love.

"If you will not return to me for your own sake," he wrote, "come for mine. I am ill and feeble, and I have need of you, as a pitying friend, if you still deny to me your love. Oh, Madeline, in the sentence of exile you have passed upon yourself, does there not still lurk some remnant of pride? Are you not virtually saying to those who love you, 'I am doing justice on myself: I choose to suffer, because I am too proud to accept your mercy, or to take your forgiveness?' Is this gracious, or loving, or kind? Did I act thus to you, when you forgave the hasty folly which led to our separation? I cannot go to you, Madeline, because you hold your place of abode a secret, but

you can come to me ; and unless all memory of our love is quenched in your heart, you will come quickly, lest perchance you may see my face no more."

The tone of reproach in which this letter was written, moved Madeline far more than any other form of pleading could have done. In hastily deeming that Maurice would despise her, when he received her confession, had she not acted rashly again ? If he still loved her, in spite of all her unworthiness, she surely might yet hope to be something more to him than a dream of bitterness ; she might yet hope to devote the rest of her life gratefully, and humbly to the steadfast heart which had borne patiently with her errors for so long. The instant she had resolved to return to England, she was impatient to be gone ; and a postscript in Mr. Brydges' letter, which had escaped her eye, turned this impatience to a fever.

"I grieve to tell you," he said, "that Mr. Pellew's ill-health is caused by the wound he received in a duel with a foreign nobleman."

As she read this, her heart quivered with fear and pain ; and the longing to be once more with Maurice ran through all her veins with the fevered, and weary aching, which she thought she had quenched so long.

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"The English packet sails to-morrow, at two in the morning," said the Scotch clerk in the office. "I would recommend your going on board to-night, ma'am, as it will be difficult to get on board at that hour. The ship lies outside the harbour, for fear of yellow fever, I believe."

Madeline paid her passage money and thanked him. Then she went to the quay, and hired a boat, and two men, desiring them to be ready at nine that evening.

This was two days after the receipt of Maurice's letter; and in this time she had bidden farewell to many poor friends, including the musician. Of late the sharp-faced clerk at the French consul's had made himself very intimate with this man, calling in to chat with him every day; and it was great news to tell him of the beautiful singer's sudden departure for England in the next packet that sailed.

As Madeline ceased bargaining with the boatmen, this keen *employé* rose from the seat where he was lounging, and coming forward he addressed them eagerly.

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"Are you certain this is the English packet?" said Madeline, as out of the deep darkness of the night the black hull of the ship loomed close upon them. "It is all right," answered an

English voice, hailing them from the deck. And, re-assured by these familiar words, Madeline thought no more of her momentary doubt.

In another moment or two she was on board, and was without delay conducted to her cabin. It was fitted up with a luxury and an elegance so remarkable, that she uttered an exclamation of surprise; but when she turned to express this wonder to her conductor, she found him gone. Weary with the heat and fatigue of the day, she went at once to rest, and when she awoke the ship was far out at sea.

Madeline was one of those rare women, whose excellent health enables them to ignore sea-sickness. When she arose in the morning, all her veins were bounding with youthful strength and hope, while the fresh breeze on the sea brought to her cheeks a deeper bloom. Thus her wondrous beauty seemed to have received some new charm, as standing alone in the saloon, she gazed around, marvelling at its graceful furniture, books, and painted panels.

“Does it please you?” asked a sudden voice, which thrilled her very heart with fear; and with face turning to the hue of death, she confronted the Duke de Briancourt. “Forgive me, Madeline,” he said, taking her unresisting hand, for she was too terror-stricken to move. “I have been guilty of a *ruse* to get you on board my yacht, but there my guilt ends. Every

respect due to my promised wife shall be yours."

The unhappy woman whom he had snared looked at him with wild eyes of anguish, and of fear.

"And this is not the English packet?" she said, slowly. "And I am here alone with you."

"With me, and with a crew devoted to me," returned the duke, with a quiet smile of triumph. "Madeline, if you have forgotten your promise, I have not. You will never leave this ship, but as my wife, and from this hour henceforth we shall never be parted for a single day."

"Heaven help me!" said Madeline, and falling on her knees, she let her face droop upon her hands in utter despair.

It would be long and weary to tell of the terrible days of fear, that followed this first interview—days that increased hourly in their terror, as Madeline became more and more convinced that, in spite of all the cunning with which he hid the fact, the duke was in reality a madman. The constant tension and strain upon all her faculties, which her position and her fear entailed upon her, began at last to steal away her sleep and strength. The duke's fitful moods of alternate anger, and tenderness terrified her alike. Once or twice she had appealed to some of the crew, but vainly. The duke, with all the cunning of a

madman, had assured them that she was mad—his mad wife, he said—and they believed him. Still through all his relentless pursuit of her, there was the same forlorn love, respectful in the midst of its fiercest resolves, and humble and sorrowful even in its despair and jealousy. But it was so horrible to be shut up with him in this wooden prison; it was so horrible to look out over the great lonely sea, and feel there was no hope and no escape, that Madeline could take small comfort from the power she still held over her mad, and dangerous lover. She could only count the weary days and weeks they had yet to sail, and wonder with a shudder what would be the end.

When the *Swift* had been twelve days at sea, the fever the duke had avoided in the harbour broke out among the crew. And now Madeline roused herself again to her new life of charity. The horrors that accompany sickness on board a small ship, where air and space are straitened, did not deter her from her brave task. There was even a passionate relief to her in this tending of the sick and the dying, which soothed the agony of her thoughts, concentrated too deeply on the despair and terror in which she was held. The duke raved and protested in vain: he could not hinder her from being the bravest, gentlest nurse on board. He was no coward himself, but brave deeds, lacking all excitement, he could not

understand. Yet his mad passion and fierce admiration were increased tenfold by Madeline's courage and devotion.

One day, as he sat watching her gloomily, he said, with a sudden outburst of rage, "Madeline, if you persist in your hatred of me, do you know what I shall do? I shall kill you. I shall poison you slowly, and watch you die. Rather a thousand times would I see you dead, than take you home to a man, who has not had the love and courage to do what I have done—search for you all over the world."

That night Madeline doubly locked her cabin door, and kneeling down to pray, she asked, not that she might live, but that she might die in the fulfilment of duty, and not ignobly by a madman's hand. But the fear of poison remained with her, and she took her food sparingly and in trembling. And so, shut up in this pest ship, a prey to terror, debarred from rest and proper nourishment, and tormented day by day by the man she had always feared so strangely, her health began at last to fade.

Five men had fallen, and had been buried in the sea, when the fever struck her; and her frame, prepared for sickness, made no resistance to the foe. In a few hours, she who had been so beautiful, so full of faults, and yet so beloved, lay dead, looking in her eternal rest like a pale and lovely marble image of herself.

The solitary woman on board, a Brazilian, whom the duke had hired to wait on Madeline, brought him the dreadful news. He could not, and would not believe the woman, until he had himself looked on Madeline's white and noble face; then, without a word he turned away, and shut himself up alone with his agony for many hours.

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Resting on chairs in the middle of the saloon, with wax lights burning around it, stood a rough coffin, made in haste. It was uncovered, and beside it leaned the Duke de Briancourt, looking down upon the folded hands, the closed eyes, and the marble lips, beautiful even in death.

"Hers was a lovely face," he said to himself, in bitterness; "but her heart was harder than a rock."

"Shut this from my eyes!" he cried, with sudden fierceness, to the men standing by him. "There are sights, I tell you, which make men go mad."

Softly and gently the men did his bidding, and moved away, leaving the duke alone with his frenzied grief; then he came forward, and leaned his hand heavily upon the lid.

"She is mine now," he said; "and Maurice Pellew shall never see her face again, living or dead."

The duke kept his word, and that night

Madeline Singleton was buried in the sea. On the table in her cabin they found a paper, with these words written on it in her own firm hand:—

“MADELINE SINGLETON,

AGED 29.

‘Righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy dealings, and just in all thy works.’”

This paper the duke cruelly sent to Maurice Pellew, and he, rightly surmising her wishes, had the words engraven on a marble tablet, which hangs still in the little church of Crehylls.

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POSTSCRIPT BY ALICE TRAFFORD.

I am asked to wind up the last mournful threads of this story. It is done in a few words. Maurice Pellew never married. He died at the early age of thirty-seven, having never fulfilled the promise of his youth, or gratified the ambition of his friends. His mother closed his eyes, feeling, perhaps sadly, that she had helped to make her son's life a failure. From that city where Madeline had dwelt he heard of her goodness and her charity: he heard also of her in-

tended return to England, and to him ; and he guessed too well the snare into which she had fallen.

After great effort the truth was discovered, and through the interest of one high in rank a complaint was laid before the Czar. The reply was mournful. The Duke de Briancourt was insane, and living a prisoner at a lonely fortress under the care of keepers. His physician had confessed to the Emperor that he had been mad for years, but through his great ability and cunning he had hid his malady from the world, often shutting himself up from all eyes but those in the secret, when he felt the power of self-control leaving him.

As for myself, I am an American now, but I still love England so well that I often visit it with my husband, and we never fail then to stay a while with friends in Cornwall.

Some years ago, at one of these visits, we heard that a smugglers' cave, near an ancient adit, had been opened, and that the skeleton of a man was discovered within it, clothed in the dress which Michael Polgrain wore when I bade him farewell on the deck of the *Penkivel*. How he came thus to die must rest for ever in this world a secret. But those who knew him best believe that, in his deep superstition, being convinced that his presence would wreck the *Penkivel*, he had generously resolved to give up

his command of her. But foreseeing how the importunities of the crew and of the "king" might shake his determination, he hid himself in the cave, intending not to quit it until the *Penkivel* had sailed. But on the very evening of the day on which he was last seen a portion of the cliff fell in, and the entrance to his hiding-place was closed up for ever. One consolation his friends had : the rock, beneath which he was crushed, must have killed him instantly.

Smuggling is a bygone story now in Cornwall, and the smugglers' caves are visited only by curious strangers, who smile and wonder, and doubt, as they listen to the wild tales told them of vanished men and vanished times.

A week after Michael Polgrain was missed, the *Penkivel* sailed for Brest. She was known to have taken in her cargo there ; but from that time she was heard of no more. From the date of this great loss, the smuggler king—whose real name was Carter—grew unsuccessful in his ventures. Eventually he was exchequered, and died miserably poor.

Have I told all ? No ; I have omitted to say that the name of the young Lady Crehylls is Lydia, and the love that she and her husband bear to each other dates from that day, when he came to his own home a wanderer. Often when I go to Crehylls they show me the elm where

they kissed each other, and Lydia stood and watched the small forlorn figure, as it went down the avenue beneath the sombre trees into the dark night. I never tire of hearing that story, nor of seeing the tears that shine in the bright eyes of the loving wife, as she lays her hand tenderly on her husband's arm, and points to the spot where he turned to take his last look of the loving face, watching him so wistfully.

A very aged lady still lives at Penkivel, beloved of all: one or two of her grandchildren are always with her. My brother Alfred is her steward and friend. She never forgot he was her boy's playmate. Aged as she is now, I still hope, when I come to England, to meet her again.

To meet again! Surely those are good words to end with; so, having written them, I lay down my pen.

THE END.



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